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RELIGION AND LIFE

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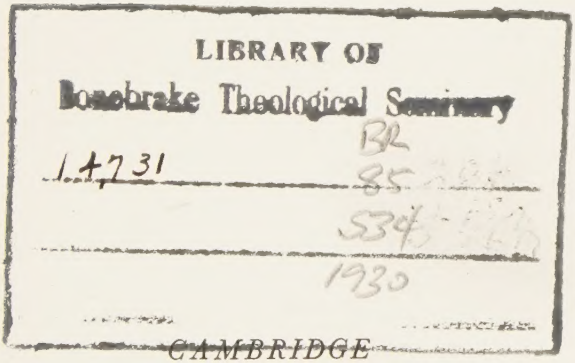
Being the
WILLIAM BELDEN NOBLE LECTURES
delivered in Harvard University
1930

BY
W. B. SELBIE, M.A., D.D.
PRINCIPAL OF MANSFIELD COLLEGE
AND HON. FELLOW OF BRASENOSE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The
WILLIAM BELDEN NOBLE LECTURES

THIS Lectureship was constituted a perpetual foundation in Harvard University in 1898, as a memorial to the late WILLIAM BELDEN NOBLE of Washington, D.C. (Harvard, 1885). The deed of gift provides that the lectures shall be not less than six in number, that they shall be delivered annually, and, if convenient, in the Phillips Brooks House, during the season of Advent. Each lecturer shall have ample notice of his appointment, and the publication of each course of lectures is required. The purpose of the Lectureship will be further seen in the following citation from the deed of gift by which it was established:—

'*The object of the founder of the Lectures is to continue the mission of William Belden Noble, whose supreme desire it was to extend the influence of Jesus as the way, the truth, and the life; to make known the meaning of the words of Jesus, "I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly". In accordance with the large interpretation of the Influence of Jesus by the late Phillips Brooks, with whose religious teaching he in whose memory the Lectures are established and also the founder of the Lectures were in deep sympathy, it is intended that the scope of the Lectures shall be as wide as the highest interests of humanity. With this end in view—the perfection of the spiritual man and the consecration by the spirit of Jesus of every department of human*

character, thought, and activity—the Lectures may include philosophy, literature, art, poetry, the natural sciences, political economy, sociology, ethics, history both civil and ecclesiastical, as well as theology and the more direct interests of the religious life. Beyond a sympathy with the purpose of the Lectures, as thus defined, no restriction is placed upon the lecturer.'

PREFACE

THIS volume consists of six lectures delivered in the Divinity School of Harvard University under the William Belden Noble Foundation. The purpose of this Lectureship has been defined as follows: 'The object of the founder of the Lectures is to continue the mission of William Belden Noble, whose supreme desire it was to extend the influence of Jesus Christ as the Way, the Truth, and the Life; to make known the meaning of the words of Jesus, "I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly".' These words suggested to me not only the title of the lectures but their general scope and aim, which is to give a simple and summary interpretation of religion in its relation to the life and thought of men under modern conditions. One of the great needs of our time is to deliver the presentation of Christian truth from dogmatism on the one hand and traditionalism on the other, and to persuade men and women that the developments of modern science and modern philosophy do not rule religion out or render it any the less necessary for the living of a full human life. Many references in the lectures show how indebted I am to fuller and more scholarly works on the same subject, but I am not without hope that a simpler and less technical treatment may have its uses for students and others in these times of perplexity and distress.

W. B. SELBIE.

OXFORD.
July, 1930.

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RELIGION AND LIFE

I

RELIGION AND HISTORY

IT has been said that there is no such thing as religion, there are only religions; and men have generally acted in the past on some such supposition. There are still to be found many people who, when they speak of religion, mean the Christian religion, and when they speak of the Christian religion mean some particular sect and who regard all other religions as false, heathenish, and works of the devil. On the other hand, we may note quite a different spirit in ancient writings like Cicero's *De Natura Deorum* and Plutarch's *Isis and Osiris*, and also in the Middle Ages in St. Thomas Aquinas' *Summa Gentilium*. When Schleiermacher (who in this respect as in so many others was a pioneer) wrote his famous *Discourses on Religion* addressed to the cultured among its despisers, he was one of the first to go outside the bounds of Christianity and take into consideration the ideas underlying some of the great religions of the world. But his knowledge of these religions was superficial and traditional, and, while the use he was willing to make of them contributed something to his philosophy of religion, he cannot be said to have made any real approach either to a science or a history of religions. The same is true of writers like Lessing, Herder, and Hegel. While all of them deal with religion in a much broader and freer spirit than that of the dogmatic theology of their time, their stand-

point and method cannot be regarded as in any sense scientific. They agree that religion has had a history and been subject to a development, and that in it is to be found a common element, something *sui generis* and characteristic of human nature as such, and they seek to establish their philosophy of religion on the broad foundations of the religious consciousness and the facts of religious experience. In this respect they too were pioneers, and their work is of the utmost importance. Incomplete though it is, it serves to illustrate some of the dangers and pitfalls attending the study of religion by the historical and comparative method—dangers which have been considerably increased by its popularization in modern times. It should be strongly insisted upon that the study can only be usefully pursued in a strictly scientific spirit. It must be based on a collection and classification of all the available phenomena and that without any *arrière pensée* or preconceived theory. A careful distinction must be drawn between the underlying psychology of religious ideas and the external forms in which they find expression, and so between similarities which are accidental and due to external circumstances, and those which are essential and rooted in the normal working of the religious consciousness. Hasty generalizations must at all costs be avoided, as also must all attempts to fit the phenomena into preconceived moulds. The familiar tendency to account for all religions as due to the influence of fear, or sex, or the social impulse, are, as we shall see later, cases in point and illustrate the perils

attending all such essays in quick thinking. In spite of them, however, there can be no question as to the real value of the historical method when it is based on a careful study of the evolutionary process involved, and confined in its application to those data which are really comparable.

Two cautions must here be borne in mind:

(1) The historical method is very valuable in collecting material and marking resemblances and differences of religious phenomena among various peoples and at various times. But when it comes to framing theories of religion based on such comparison, great care must be taken to include all the data and the factors at work. It does not at all follow that similar religious ideas or practices among different peoples have the same origin or the same significance.

(2) As now generally carried out the historical method assumes the truth of the evolutionary hypothesis applied to the history of religion. This makes it necessary to be on the look-out for survivals and retrogressions in religious culture, and to allow for the influence of primitive ideas and sentiments even in religions of a highly-advanced order. The course of religious development is by no means one of easy and uniform progress.

To turn now to the history of thought on the subject, it must be confessed that until quite recent times the work done has been mainly that of the collection of materials. A pioneer in this work was Max Müller, whose writings at least laid the foundations of a science of religions and whose edition of the *Sacred*

Books of the East has been a quarry in which all later students have been glad to dig. As he used to say, 'Wer eine Religion kennt, kennt keine'. He has been followed by many writers whose concern has been to interpret mainly by describing them the great religions of the past to the modern mind.[1] The Religionsgeschichtliche School in Germany, in spite of a certain naturalistic bias, has made invaluable contributions to the historical study of religion and has perhaps done more to popularize the subject than any other group of scholars. These writers are dominated throughout by the influence of evolution, and their work needs to be supplemented from the side of theology and of philosophy, but it is none the less valuable as a collection of data. Certain extravagances have brought this method into disrepute, e.g. Gunkel identifies Ahura masda and Asshur with Abram, Aaron, and Arthur, while Jensen makes Moses, Jesus, and Paul variations of Gilgamesh, but these are eccentricities to which too much importance must not be attached.

Closely allied with them is the work of the anthropologists whose study of the habits and customs of primitive man has thrown a flood of light on the origin and function of religion. The work of Tylor, Robertson Smith, Howitt, Spencer and Gillen, Roscoe, Haddon, Nassau, Malinowski, and a host of others has provided abundant material for the student of religions. Full use of this has been made

[1] Cf. Tiele, Goblet d'Alviella, Chantepie de la Saussaye, Reville and G. Moore.

by writers like Marett, Stanley Cook, Frazer, and others, who make it a basis of a more or less psychological study of religion. Another example of the same method, though with a different aim and standpoint, is the religious philosophy of the French sociological school represented by Durkheim and Lévy-Bruhl. Here we have an examination and co-ordination of anthropological data in the interests of a preconceived theory of religion as a purely social phenomenon.

It is this kind of theorizing which has led to the common sneer at anthropological religion so-called, but apart from this the general result of anthropological research has been of the utmost importance for the comparative study of religion. It is impossible in a brief lecture to survey the whole range of this study. We must confine ourselves to an illustration from the anthropological field. The examination of a large number of primitive religions has failed to confirm the animistic theory of Professor E. B. Tylor, who argued that the 'minimum of religion was the belief in spiritual beings'. Further investigation has revealed a stage called by Marett that of animatism, in which we see the distinction between religion and magic reduced to vanishing point, and which may be regarded as the home or matrix of both. At this stage primitive man conceives not of spiritual beings but of the existence of a power belonging both to human beings and things which give to them certain qualities and yet is itself unseen and therefore uncanny. The attitude of mind produced by this power

—an attitude compounded of reverence and fear—may be taken to represent the earliest stage in religious development.

To this mysterious power various names have been given. The most common is *mana*, derived from the Melanesian group of peoples and often used as the generic name for this type of thing. It signifies simply power or excellence in securing a desired end, and may be applied to the skill of a hunter, to the swiftness of a canoe, the sharpness of a spear, or the peculiar quality in certain stones which are able to produce pigs and yams. It will be seen that it thus becomes something more than magical, and it should always be remembered that often the primitive savage will not call in magic until he himself has done his best. He needs magic to produce a good crop, but that does not absolve him from the necessity of tending the ground and cultivating it. A good many early religious practices, however, are concerned with getting or increasing *mana*, either for one's own sake or that of others. The widespread character of this root idea is illustrated by the variety of names given to it among very different peoples, e.g. *Orenda*, *wakam*, and *manitu* in North America, *Hasina* in Madagascar, *tondi* in Sumatra, *mulungu* in Africa, *Yambo* or *Yurup* in Australia. All of these signify a mysterious power or virtue which belongs to things and people, in some cases a natural quality, in others pure magic or charm. All this, however, belongs to the pre-animistic stage of religion and gives colour to the suggestion that the root of it

all is a certain characteristic and peculiar reaction of man to his universe.

The question of the relation between magic and religion is another of those on which anthropology has thrown a great deal of light, though it is still as it were *sub judice*. As has already been suggested, the most likely solution, in view of all the facts, is that the common root both of magic and religion is in man's emotional response to his environment, which causes him to find in his universe secret powers which he seeks to control and use. In this the magician, the medicine man, and the priest, stand very much on a level, all alike seeking to obtain *mana* for themselves or for their clients by various magical formulas, religious rites, prayer, sacrifice, or fasting. The fact that in the process of time magic declined into a black art, while religion continued to rise to ever higher forms, cannot be accounted for by any original inferiority of the one to the other. All the evidence from anthropology goes to show that no such simple explanation is possible. The process of development in both cases is exceedingly complex. Primitive man acts before he thinks and his actions are dictated by considerations which are by no means uniform. There is, however, some evidence for the view that the distinction between magic and religion is due to the fact that in process of time magic became confined to individual and so to anti-social action. One of the great aims of religion is to preserve social values, and whatever tends to destroy social values is regarded as anti-religious. The magician comes

to seek the good or evil of the individual, and this need not necessarily be good or evil for the community. The priest, on the other hand, acting in the name of religion, seeks the good of the community, and so religion becomes a positive, while magic degenerates into a purely negative force. The resentment still shown against those who describe certain religious practices as magical has had a very interesting history.

All this preliminary and pioneer work, however, has not been without fruit. Its results are seen at their best in writers like Söderblom, Otto, and Heiler. The first-named in his *Das Werden des Gottes Glaubens* (1916) has produced an exhaustive and masterly study of the belief in God traced from its most rudimentary forms in primitive religion to its highest expression in the great religions of the world. It is a genuinely comparative study based on a careful analysis and description of the various factors at work in directing and determining the forms of the belief at different stages in its development.[1]

Otto's famous work, *Das Heilige, über das Irrationale in der Idee des Göttlichen und sein Verhältnis zum Rationalen* (1917), now well known in Germany and in its English translation, is an acute and penetrating investigation into the idea of the sacred as fundamental to all religion. It is a work of small compass but vast range. Its method is truly comparative. It brings to light the religious principle (*Das Numenose*) underlying all forms and expressions of religion, an

[1] Cf. also Farnell's Gifford Lecture on 'The Attributes of God'.

irrational religious *a priori* with which we have always to reckon. Whether we agree with all its conclusions or not we must acknowledge that the book represents a new departure in the treatment of religion. It is built on generous lines, historical and anthropological, philosophical and psychological, and the positions it lays down are those which all future investigators will have to take into consideration.

A work of narrower range but even greater breadth of treatment is Heiler's *Das Gebet* (1918), *Eine religionsgeschichtliche und religionspsychologische Untersuchung*. It presents us with an exhaustive study of prayer as the central phenomenon of religion, and treats of its historical manifestation in all the religions of the world, from the lowest to the highest, and of its psychological origin and worth. Again, we have a fine example of the comparative method and the restriction of the ground makes comparison at once more possible and more useful. The book is a striking specimen of German thoroughness and patience, but it is written with more vision, imagination, and spiritual sensitiveness than such books often show. In its range and completeness it is practically a last word on the subject.

Following these comes a much more recent book, Hauer's *Die Religionen, ihr Werden, ihr Sinn, ihre Wahrheit*. It is the first volume of a work dealing with the history, psychology, and philosophy of religion, a work of wide scope and deep insight, written with the conviction that religion is 'kein Begriff, sondern

Lebensmacht'. Words like these serve to suggest the new view-point from which the subject of religion is being approached in our time. The evolution hypothesis cannot be confined to the history of religion. It regulates also the history of thought *on* religion. Here there has been very remarkable progress. We may say, roughly speaking, that the purely anthropological and historical treatment of the subject which once held the field has given way to a more psychological treatment, and that this in turn has opened the door to a philosophy of religion at once more reasonable and more true to the facts.

It is now generally agreed that while the study of religious origins is very important, it is only one aspect of the subject. In its earliest stages religion belongs to the instinctive and non-rational side of our nature. But it is seldom long at this level. Reason plays its part in the process of development, but again it is not the only factor concerned. As we look over the whole vast panorama of the history of religions we find it a scene of bewildering variety, though not without traces of order, plan, and purpose. The easy schematism which sees it all in terms of an ascending series of gradations with Christianity at its apex will not stand the test of examination in the light of the facts. It is always necessary to distinguish the religious impulse, sentiment, or instinct from the various forms, practical or intellectual, in which it finds expression. There is progress, no doubt, but it is by no means uniform. The religious spirit is essentially conservative, and it is a very common

thing to find even in the highest forms of religion survivals of some very primitive elements. We have always to reckon with the influence of external conditions which are all-powerful in determining both the measure and direction of the religious impulse.

It is impossible, therefore, to account for religion simply or to explain it in terms of any one instinct or faculty of our being. It may be, as Professor Clement Webb suggests, that religion is quite undefinable. In any case attempts to define it are best reserved until the material has been well sifted and studied. What is certainly to be avoided is the all too common tendency to start with a definition and to seek to make the facts fit into it.

Among the most recent theories as to the common element underlying all forms of religious behaviour is that which makes religion have to do primarily not with facts but with values. Höffding, e. g., frankly defines it as the 'conservation of values', or as the feeling that no value perishes out of the world. So God to him becomes the principle of such a value conservation. This idea has been adopted by Professor Bosanquet and transformed in the following way. He writes, 'Wherever man fairly and loyally throws the seat of his values outside his immediate self into something which he worships with which he identifies his will, and which he takes as an object, solid and secure, at least relatively to his private existence—as an artist in his attitude to beauty or a man of science to truth—there we have in its degree the experience of religion.' Now it is quite clear

that there is something more here than simply a recognition of values, there is an attitude to the values recognized, or to the seat of them, an attitude expressed in the word worship. It is this, therefore, that constitutes the religious differentia, and the definition is little more than an *ignotum per ignotius*. If religion is worshipping something not ourselves, and if it is worshipped because of a certain value it possesses and in order to conserve such value, then there needs to be further inquiry into that which gives to the object this value and justifies this attitude. No one doubts that religion is concerned with values. Its main function, indeed, is to set a new valuation on human life. But this value is derived from itself, from a power of interpreting life which belongs to religion alone. While, therefore, it is quite legitimate to assert that religion conserves certain values, this cannot be regarded as a monopoly of religion nor does its action in this respect provide what is needed for a definition of religion. It only serves further to emphasize the necessity of discovering that which is distinctive of religion and that which makes it operate as it does in this matter of values. For the values with which religion deals in the long run are themselves religious and must be interpreted through religion, not religion through them.

It is some such conclusion as this which is compelling certain modern writers on religion to find its origin and explanation in a religious sense or quality inherent in man as such and by him transferable to objects and ideas. For example, Otto's

conception of the sacred (*Das Heilige*), which he strips of all ethical and philosophical interpretations and reads in the light of the non-rational or instinctive quality of man's nature, and for which he coins the word *numinöse*, is a case in point. This numinous is the distinctive religious quality, something elemental, closely bound up with all man's reactions to the universe, irrational but capable of being rationalized in a multitude of ways. We have here something analogous to Schleiermacher's feeling of dependence on the one hand, and to that animistic attitude to nature on the other in which anthropologists find the beginnings of religion among primitive peoples. Closely analogous to this idea, or indeed perhaps a development of it, is the explanation of religion given by Ernst Troeltsch from a more philosophical point of view. He regards religion as an instinct in the sense of a specific irreducible constituent of the human spirit. It is wholly irrational in its inception, but capable of rationalization. This religious consciousness in its naïve and irrational form is the most intense of all man's psychic activities. Man's religious consciousness is an immediate presentation which finds for itself various forms of expression both practical and intellectual, all of which, however, are of a purely secondary character. There is, therefore, for Troeltsch a religious *a priori* which he arrives at both by psychological and epistemological methods. As one of his exponents [1] puts it:

'The results of the psychological analysis of religious

[1] Sleigh, *Sufficiency of Christianity*, p. 76.

experience with its personalistic and theistic implications, together with the results of the epistemological analysis and its similar, though independently reached implications, jointly yield the *a priori* condition upon which the possibility and fact of religion depend. The Religious consciousness of union with the Infinite is an experience which relates the finite centrally to the whole development of life, and indicates the ultimate law of its significance and movement. In the great religious personalities their "revelations" are disclosures of relationship of the finite to the Absolute (naïvely apprehended and symbolically expressed, of course), which the more clearly it is apprehended, the greater the degree of their fellowship with God, and the more urgently it calls for a closer union of all the activities of the mind within the religious centre—a relationship in virtue of which all worths are related to an abstract existence as their origin and standard. Religion consists in this, in short, that it is a law of the normal consciousness, and is such both from its feeling of interior necessity and obligation and from its organic position in consciousness, which latter only receives through religion its union with a relation to an objective world reason.'

This is an interesting philosophical application of the doctrine of the originality and immediateness of religious experience. Troeltsch is content to account for this on psychological grounds, but he realizes that it has an objective value and is capable of rational justification.

Such an attitude as this to the problem of the origin and meaning of religion is at least a good corrective of that purely psychological interpretation

which occupies so much attention just now. One form of it connects religion with the will to live or urge to life in which man's *libido* finds expression. This is at least more true to the facts than are any of the attempts to ground religion in some one or other of the primary instincts or faculties of our being. In religion the whole man is active and is active for certain ends, and Troeltsch is certainly right when he insists on the importance of the teleological element in religion. Origins can indeed only be rightly studied and estimated in the light of the ends served. There is no doubt that religion does serve the ends of life, that it makes for life more abundant and is therefore an expression of the *élan vital*. The study of religion as behaviour in all its infinite variety shows how deeply rooted it is in man's nature and how profoundly it has affected the whole course of his social and individual development. It is, as Dr. Hauer says, not merely idea but a life force (*Lebensmacht*), but to say this is not to define it. Psychology of religion does good service in analysing the grounds of religious experience and in showing how closely religion is connected with the most fundamental traits and powers of our nature. But it is hardly capable of explaining or defining that which constitutes the essence of religion itself.

It must also be recognized that psychology lays far too much stress on the purely subjective side of religious experience. In this presentation of religion God becomes merely a projection from man's imagination and desires, and the world of spiritual

experience an illusion. Here, however, psychology raises an issue for which it cannot provide the solution. Projection and idealization are to the human mind natural and characteristic methods of procedure, and the use of them only shows that in religion, as in other things, human nature follows its bent. But the process does not therefore end in illusion, nor can we argue from it that there is no objective reality behind or present to the religious consciousness. As Tansley says,[1] 'We cannot deny the truth of the substance of religion, though we may criticize many of its forms. All universal and self-consistent expressions of the human spirit have a claim to the name of truth.' In other words, Professor Pringle-Pattison is right when he contends that 'necessary implication in thought expresses a similar implication in reality', 'the best we think or can think must be'. This is Troeltsch's religious *a priori* over again, that regulative ontological principle which gives to the irrational or non-rational religious consciousness a certain quality of rational necessity, so that it becomes not merely subjective but objective.

'Thus our idea of God the best we think or can think as an ontological concept is in relation to time to be understood as representing a reality which is striving to actualize itself in the temporal process, and this process is an historical development of the capacities of finite personalities in their growing apprehension of that reality and deepening enjoyment of life. The institutions of this historical development, social and religious, are the pro-

[1] *The New Psychology*, p. 139.

ducts of human intelligence, the result of ideas which are also to be designated values, since they are not merely personal idiosyncrasies, but creative recognitions or realizations of a rational system objectively existent whose significance comes to full ontological expression in the idea of God.' [1]

It is important to lay stress on considerations of this kind, not merely because they show the insufficiency of any purely subjective interpretation of religion, but also because they rule out the possibility of accounting for religion by suggestion, whether auto, or hetero, or mass. The suggestion hypothesis certainly accounts, if not for many of the phenomena of religion, at least for the forms which they assume and the effects they produce in human behaviour. Auto-suggestion plays a large part in determining and fortifying the beliefs of individuals, while mass-suggestion is a most powerful factor in producing conversions. Here, again, we have to recognize the action of religion through the normal processes of man's nature. But this is a very different thing from saying that all religion is the result of auto-suggestion, or is due to man's general suggestibility. The whole reflective process in religion makes against any such conclusion, and even on the emotional side there is abundant evidence of the working of the religious impulse in direct opposition to the normal suggestions of a man's nature. Witness the case of prophetic calls, both ancient and modern,[2] and the reluctance

[1] Sleigh, p. 79.

[2] Cf. Jeremiah and St. Paul.

of the subjects to receive them, and also many cases of conversion and mystical religious experience where men and women have been driven into courses utterly at variance with their inclination and wills. It is characteristic of normal religious experience that it controls our instincts and the primary impulses of our nature and often acts as a check upon them. Those who would trace the origin of religion to the search of primitive man for some helpful power greater than himself in an unfriendly world, have to reckon with the fact that many of the gods in the lowest forms of religion by no means answer to this need. The holy is certainly not always the helpful. Suggestion works generally with ideas already either consciously or unconsciously present. It has, as we have seen, a considerable part to play in the development and conditioning of religion, but it leaves unsolved the problem of its origin.

Much the same must be said of the various attempts to find a sociological origin for religion and to interpret it in terms of the group mind. Of these, that of Leuba is the more philosophical, that of Durkheim and the French sociologists more anthropological. Leuba, e.g. argues that 'There is no question but that humanity idealized and conceived as a manifestation of creative energy possesses surpassing qualifications for a source of religious inspiration'. He sees in 'ideal humanity' a 'concrete reality' round which religion centres, and which gives definite direction to its aims. Society thus becomes the ground of man's faith and sense of duty, if not the actual

object of his worship. Leuba claims that this is something different from Positivism, but it is not easy to see where the difference lies. With him society seems to play exactly the same role as Le Grand Être of Comte. No one questions the importance of society and of social considerations in determining the forms of religious cultus and in producing religious sanctions and religious inspiration. But this is a very different thing from turning society into a God or from finding in reverence for humanity the source and spring of religious thought and action. The social sense or group-mind is but one among many factors in religious development.

Durkheim reaches a similar conclusion from more psychological premisses. He finds in totemism, especially as it is exhibited among the native types of Australia, the fundamental cause of religion and the determinative element in religious organization. He argues[1] that, 'In a general way it is unquestionable that a society has all that is necessary to arouse the sensation of the divine in minds merely by the power it has over them; for to its members it is what a God is to his worshippers.' The distinctive thing in religion he discovers to be the contrast between the sacred and the profane, and therefore defines it as 'a unified system of beliefs and practices relative to sacred things, i.e. to say, things set apart and forbidden—beliefs and practices which unite into one single moral community called a Church all those who adhere to them'. Durkheim's work is full of

[1] *Elementary Forms*, p. 206.

insight and he has made a real contribution to our understanding of the elementary forms of religion, but his social theory rests on far too narrow a basis. Totemism has not the universal significance which he attaches to it, nor are the Australian beliefs and practices as typical as he would have us believe. The point again is, that while social influences are all-powerful in shaping religious ideas and their expression, it does not by any means follow that society is either the cause or the object of the religious sentiment.

We are now in a position to consider some of the theories of the origin of religion which ascribe it to some single human trait or faculty. In the first place is all religion to be reduced to fear? *Primus in orbe Deos fecit timor.* This has been a favourite theory with a good many students of Comparative Religion, and there is a great deal of evidence pointing in this direction. What Otto calls *Das Tremendum* has an importance of its own. In many religions we find a deification of the dreadful and the uncanny. Nature in her wilder moods is fruitful in suggestions to this end. So many of the early representations of Gods are hideous in form and intentionally terrifying, and witness to the place which the demonic holds in the popular imagination of civilized as well as of primitive folk. This familiar attitude of mind underlies the sense of awe and reverence and has much to do with forms of worship. It works in with the sense of wonder and mystery. Thus fear in religion is by no means merely negative in its effects. It is

undoubtedly fruitful in tabus and inhibitions, but it has certain positive results. In contrast to the animal under the influence of fear, the primitive man seeks to appease or render innocuous the object that has frightened him. Though at first he may follow his blind instinct to flee from it, on second thoughts he finds a better way. His fear becomes awe, and his attitude to the fearful indicates the beginning at least of a rationalizing process which attributes to it animistic powers and takes measures to safeguard himself and his family against it. It is true of fear, as of every other primitive human trait, that it plays its part in originating and determining the religious impulse. On the other hand, it is always necessary in this connexion to reckon with the fact of courage. It is true, no doubt, that fear is often overcome by some more urgent instinct as, for example, the maternal, when a bird or animal will risk its life in defence of its young. With human beings, however, that explanation will not always hold good. The fact that a man or woman may gather up, as it were, all the forces of his or her personality to resist the impulse of fear, is one that cannot be gainsaid, and might be quoted in confirmation of the belief that we at least are not always at the mercy of our instincts.

Another and most persistent attempt to associate religion in its beginnings with some one primitive human instinct is the modern tendency which has been greatly fostered, if not originated, by Freudian psychology to assert that religion is rooted and

grounded in sex. The chief modern exponents of this view are Shroeder, Swisher, and Pfister, and their position is stated in a sentence: 'Religion is primarily emotional and therefore in its broadest sense of sex origin.' This is a hasty generalization which cannot be substantiated by the facts, and I need do no more than quote the following criticism of it by Malinowski, who, of all modern writers on the subject, has perhaps the best right to speak.

'Propagation and nutrition stand first and foremost among the vital concerns of man. Their relation to religious belief and practice has been often recognized and even over-emphasized. Especially sex has been, from some older writers up to the psycho-analytic school, frequently regarded as the main source of religion. In fact, however, it plays an astonishingly insignificant part in religion, considering its force and insidiousness in human life in general. Besides love, magic, and the use of sex in certain magical performances—phenomena not belonging to the domain of religion—there remain to be mentioned here only acts of licence at harvest festivities or other public gatherings, the facts of temple prostitution and, at the level of barbarism and lower civilization, the worship of phallic divinities. Contrary to what one would expect, in savagery sexual cults play an insignificant role. It must also be remembered that acts of ceremonial licence are not mere indulgence, but that they express a reverent attitude towards the forces of generation and fertility in man and nature, forces on which the very existence of society and culture depends. Religion, the permanent source of moral control, which changes its incidence but remains eternally vigilant, has

to turn its attention to these forces, at first drawing them merely into its sphere, later on submitting them to repression, finally establishing the ideal of chastity and the sanctification of askesis.'

Thus the application of the comparative method to primitive religion shows quite clearly that religion cannot be accounted for or derived from the action of any one instinct to the exclusion of others. It rather belongs to man's personality as a whole and represents his total reaction to the universe. Therefore it is not without justification that many have argued that in religion there is something original—a tendency or capacity native to man and finding expression for itself in a great variety of forms determined by varying conditions and circumstances both external and internal. It profoundly affects the whole course of man's development and in the long run is a factor making for life and progress both in the individual and in society. It is indefinable in the sense that it cannot be interpreted in terms of any other power or faculty of our being, but only by and through itself.

So much at least we may learn from this historical inquiry. It may be said that it does not carry us very far and that its results are purely subjective. That is true. But it breaks up the ground, lays foundations, and supplies the material with which we may go on to build. In other words, the comparative and historical study of religion is the necessary preliminary to any philosophy of religion and to all theology. It is a science, and the facts which it supplies, tabulates,

and co-ordinates have always to be reckoned with in any attempt to understand or justify the ways of God with man. As Dr. Farnell says,

'The science of religion is not solely an intellectual activity: it cannot avoid being also pragmatic. Whether its influence on the religious mind is helpful or harmful depends greatly on the wisdom with which its results are used. This at least is certain, that if progress in religion is still humanly possible—possible, that is, through human thought and will—comparative religion can be a most useful guide for pointing the paths of advance: and if no advance is possible, it can still be of service in saving us from possible retrogression: for the full history of religion includes the darkest chapters in the whole record of human illusion and misery.'[1]

At the same time it is true, as Dr. Benjamin Kidd suggests, that religion is the greatest factor in human progress and no study of history can be complete that leaves it out of account.

[1] *The Attributes of God*, p. 10.

II

THE PSYCHOLOGICAL INTERPRETATION OF RELIGION

IT is often claimed that psychology is a modern science and that its application to religion is a new thing under the sun. This is only relatively true. Wherever men have reflected on the nature and experience of the religious subject, their reflection has naturally taken a psychological form. There is a great deal of psychology in the Bible, though it may be of a crude and unscientific character. The Old Testament anthropology, for example, has a definitely psychological basis in its description of man as all compact of body, soul, and spirit. St. Paul interprets his own religious experience in loose psychological terms, and he has been followed in this by Christian experimentalists throughout the ages. The Confessions of St. Augustine and the writings of both earlier and later mystics, to say nothing of the lives of the saints, contain abundant material for the student of religious psychology. In more recent writers, like Schleiermacher and Jonathan Edwards, the psychological method is more apparent, though still quite unscientific in form. Both writers study and interpret religion from the standpoint of the experience of the religious subject, and on it base certain conclusions as to the nature and origin of religion itself. Much more recently, however, this method has been extended and adapted in such a way as to provide

what amounts to a new science of religion based entirely on an examination of the experience of the religious subject. We have here, it is claimed, a mass of phenomena patient of a purely psychological explanation. It is argued that they can and ought to be resolved into their constituent elements, and that when this is done religion is seen to be purely subjective in its origin and effects—a spider web spun by man out of his own entrails. It need hardly be said that this extreme conclusion cannot easily be justified on psychological grounds. It is neither inevitable nor universally accepted, and I mention it at this early stage in our inquiry merely as a warning.

Before we can successfully apply the psychological method in the investigation of religion we must be clear as to the scope and meaning of psychology in general. Psychology may be described as the study of mental processes and of the behaviour based upon them. Both these elements are involved in it, and the attempt by some modern psychologists to separate them and exclude one or the other is, to say the least, unfortunate. It may be true that we know little of some mental processes apart from the behaviour or action to which they give rise. But it is equally true that certain forms of behaviour are quite unintelligible apart from the mental states which originate them. The position which Dr. McDougall describes as a sane behaviourism combines the study of states of consciousness ascertainable by introspection and that of the objective facts of behaviour. Both are

necessary to any real understanding of human life and action. To leave out one or the other is to put a premium on a one-sided interpretation, and when this is done in the interests of a preconceived theory it is hopelessly unscientific.

No one now denies that all psychology has a physiological basis. But that need mean no more than that the brain and nervous system are the organ of mind and leaves mind in the long run unexplained. Mere behaviour, whether in the sense of conscious actions or unconscious physiological processes, is unable by itself to present us with a complete account of mental processes or attitudes. There is here a plus to be accounted for, and it represents that which is distinctive of mind. Feelings, emotions, choices, imaginations, purposes, and ideals, cannot be ignored or explained away. They all have their accompanying physical changes, but these do not explain them, and still less do they account for the belief that human behaviour is not a mere reaction to such stimuli, but something more. When we yield to the conviction that it is we who act, think, and feel, we claim a certain unifying power over our impulses and instincts. In other words, we assert that mysterious thing called personality, which, though on strict behaviourist principles there is no room for it, persists in asserting itself at every turn of our experience. Though it carries us rather outside the sphere of psychology and anticipates a discussion which must come later, we shall do well to remember that behaviourism pressed to its logical conclusion implies

a purely mechanistic interpretation of human life and of the Universe. At best this can only be part of the story—a true and necessary part no doubt—but there is another equally true and equally necessary to a full comprehension of man and his relations to the world around him. As Professor Eddington has said:

'The materialist who is convinced that all phenomena arise from electrons and quanta and the like controlled by mathematical formulae, must presumably hold the belief that his wife is a rather elaborate differential equation: but he is probably tactful enough not to obtrude this opinion in domestic life. If this kind of scientific dissection is felt to be inadequate and irrelevant in ordinary personal relationships, it is surely out of place in the most personal relationship of all—that of the human soul to the Divine Spirit.' [1]

This brings us at once to the heart of our problem. What bearing has the study of mental processes and behaviour on religion, on man's belief in a spiritual world, on his relations with the unseen? It is, of course, obvious that on any strictly behaviourist theory there is no room for religion at all save as a purely subjective illusion. But, as we have already suggested, behaviourism really begs the question at issue, and if we are to approach the subject scientifically we must take into account all the phenomena available and among them the religious consciousness *per se*. The question at issue here is as to the objective validity of religious experience. To the

[1] *The Nature of the Physical World*, p. 341.

solution of this question psychology can only make a very definite and limited contribution. It has much to teach us as to the content, variations, and action of religious experience, and thus can supply valuable data for the philosophy of religion. But it is a quite illegitimate extension of the province of psychology to regard it as capable of either proving or disproving the reality of the spiritual world or the existence of God. When, therefore, certain modern psychologists claim that psychology eviscerates religious experience of all positive content and objective reality, it is time to call a halt and re-examine the whole matter afresh from the standpoint both of philosophy and psychology.

As we have already seen, it is often argued that God is never anything more than our idea of Him, and that this idea is merely a projection from desires and needs which create it for their own satisfaction. We are dependent creatures and conscious of our dependence, and God, therefore, becomes that on which we think we depend. Now this may be a quite accurate description of the mental process underlying much of our religious experience and, indeed, of experience generally. Projection is a normal and well-defined form of mental activity, but the use of it does not either prove or disprove the truth or reality of that which is attained by it. Dr. William Brown, for example, argues that both projection and its counterpart or antithesis—regression—are commonly met with in pathological cases. He also suggests that 'analysis of these cases, so far as it is

successful, removes both the projection and the regression, and the patient becomes more normal with less regression and less projection. On the other hand, the religious feelings which the individual has are not diminished in their essence by the analysis; rather are they increased, although superstition and spurious religiosity do tend to disappear'. This pathological interpretation of the facts is at least as tenable as that which reduces religious experience to an illusion because of the part presumably played in it by projection. The fact is that the study of the psychological processes involved in religious experience cannot be pursued *in vacuo* and altogether apart from the consideration of values. Attempts to take a purely external view of the phenomena must end in failure because they leave out of account just those factors which are needed to make a fair estimate possible. It is at least as open to argument that some Power outside ourselves is concerned in producing and developing our religious experiences as that these experiences themselves give rise to our belief in such a power. The fact that religion tends to the unification of life, to the pacifying of our internal conflicts, and to the harmonizing of the self with the whole around it, at least warrants the assumption that there is something more in it than mere subjective illusion. This becomes still more probable when we consider the fundamental unity which underlies all the varieties of religious experience—a unity which shows itself not merely in institutions, ceremonies, and ideas, but in an intensification of

life and a moral catharsis which are unmistakable. In other words, the fundamental values of religion carry with them the conviction of reality.

William James in his great book, *The Varieties of Religious Experience*, did magnificent pioneer work in this field and laid all students of religion under a deep debt. But the method he adopted in his treatment of the subject was faulty in at least two respects, and so tended to confuse the issue, and unfortunately his example here has been followed by many others. In the first place he derives his data from cases which can only be regarded as exceptional, and defends himself by saying that 'it always leads to a better understanding of a thing's significance to consider its exaggerations and perversions'. This is surely very misleading. It is as though a doctor were to claim that the human body could be best understood by studying pathology rather than physiology. Both are necessary, but each must be kept in its place. The abnormalities and perversions of religion have an interest and a value of their own, but they represent only one side of the picture. But far more important is that normal and healthy religious experience which has its issue in a sane and balanced mentality and a high standard of moral conduct. Very little has been done as yet in the way of a thorough psychological investigation of normal religious experience. It will probably be found that so far from explaining such experience, or explaining it away, psychology gives good reason for regarding it as organic to man, and as the means by which he

makes contact with that wider spiritual universe in which alone he can find the true satisfaction of his needs. James himself recognizes that there is in all of us a higher part, as he calls it, which is at once the cause of our miseries and of our progress. In religious experience man 'becomes conscious that this higher part is coterminous and continuous with a *More* of the same quality which is operative in the Universe outside of him, and which he can keep in working touch with and in a fashion get on board of and save himself when all his lower being has gone to pieces in the wreck'. Psychology makes it quite clear that there is in man's native religious make up a place for this *More*, but it can prove nothing as to its nature or objective reality.

In the second place James's treatment of religious experience, like that of many other psychologists, is purely external and contents itself with cataloguing facts apart from any attempt at valuation. Yet as we have already seen religion has to do inevitably with values and involves certain very definite values of its own. These can only be understood and appreciated, as it were, from within. No mere outside view is adequate. The beauty of 'storied windows, richly dight', is quite hidden from one who walks round the building outside. It is only revealed to him when he comes within and sees them with the sunlight streaming through. So religion will always be a sealed book to the mere outside observer. To the man who has no ear for music a Beethoven symphony means nothing. He hears the sounds, he may even

be able to read the score, but to him the soul of the thing is missing and the wonder of it wakes no answering thrill in his breast. So the man who himself has had no real religious experience can never understand it in others and still less can he interpret it. 'The secret of the Lord is with them that fear Him.' Thus the psychologist who observes and records religious emotions and behaviour as though they were the contortions of a puppet pulled by invisible strings may be able to describe what is happening but remains blind to its real and vital significance. As we have already seen, the expert in religion is not the scientist but the saint, and to appreciate the values which religion has for its normal experient an understanding born of sympathy and fellow feeling is necessary.

We may agree, then, that if psychology is to make any real and lasting contribution to the interpretation of religion it must not confine itself to the critical analysis of the mental processes which are involved in the religious life and outlook. Psychology has certainly done good service in this direction. It has enabled us to distinguish the parts played by feeling, intellect, and will in the religious consciousness, and the great importance of the subconscious in this connexion. It has thrown much new light on such religious phenomena as conversion, prayer, mysticism, and worship. In doing so it has opened up new ground and provided the student of religion with abundant new material for a more positive and constructive treatment of the subject. Indeed the

work of psychology in connexion with religion may be said to begin and end with this provision of material. What is to be done with the material so collected is a question that carries us far outside the borders of psychology proper and can only be dealt with by theology and philosophy of religion.

There are, however, certain positive advantages accruing from the psychological study of religion, most of them of a strictly practical nature. In the first place the psychology of religion directs our attention to a certain common element underlying all forms of religious expression and to the fact that this is no adventitious or alien growth, but intimately bound up with man's total reaction to his Universe. In spite of the immense variety in cultus and belief, and in spite of the chequered history of the religious sentiment in different parts of the world, that sentiment itself remains *sui generis* and works out to similar conclusions from widely different premisses. Whether we interpret it in terms of Otto's numinous or of Troeltsch's *a priori*, or whether we reduce it to some one of our primitive instincts, there can be no doubt that religious behaviour and the religious attitude are the work of the whole man or personality and represent something natural and inevitable in his outlook. The old theory that religion was the work of interested persons, a body of restrictions imposed on men from without, breaks down utterly in the light of psychological investigation. In that light it is seen to be an entirely natural process, a quite normal feature in man's relations to and interpreta-

tion of his universe. That it should be profoundly modified by the circumstances and conditions of his daily life, and especially by those of a disquieting and terrifying nature, goes without saying. But even in these modifications there is a similarity which points to a certain common element beneath them all. Amid all the changes that have come about in the long story of man's life on this planet there are certain traits in human nature that do not change. Sorrow is the same the world over and in every age. A mother weeping over her dead child to-day feels just as such sorrowing mothers have felt since the beginning of time. So, too, sorrow for sin, remorse, repentance, and the longing for forgiveness, are universal. They find almost identical expression on Babylonian tablets, in the fifty-first psalm, the Confessions of Augustine, and the prayers of modern men. And religion has everywhere justified itself as an answer to these needs. It has worked and worked successfully, and so proved its power. It takes man outside of himself and perfects his nature by bringing him into living relations with a living God. It has to be judged in the long run by its highest achievements and not merely by its lowly beginnings. So judged it stands out as something integral to humanity, and as the greatest factor in the progress both of the individual and of the race.

The study of the psychology of religion has also done good service in drawing attention to the mental states and the processes concerned in the religious observances of primitive peoples. The mere examina-

tion and description of cultus, ritual, belief, &c., however important as a means of discovering external resemblances and identity of source and development, can do very little to help towards an understanding of the religious consciousness. It is only as we come to analyse this consciousness in its most irrational as well as in its more sophisticated forms of expression that we can gather some inkling of its nature and of the great part it plays both in individual and social development. While his mentality is still in what M. Lévy-Bruhl calls a prelogical state, man has some pretty clear notions as to his relations with the Universe around him. Life is for the primitive a complex and rather terrifying business. It pays him to keep on good terms with nature, with animals, and with his fellow man. These may be potential enemies or potential allies. They may protect or feed him or compass his destruction. Unconsciously, therefore, he invests them with mysterious powers and orders his steps warily lest a worse thing befall him. This interpretation of and attitude to the Universe is the root of all religion, and however irrational it may appear to the modern eye, represents an unconscious reflective process which is strong enough to influence the whole of man's life. It is not long since it was seriously contended that religion was not in any sense natural to man, and in proof of this we were pointed to certain savage peoples who it was said were entirely without anything that could be called religion. Closer investigation, however, has now shown that these very

peoples have a religion that regulates their whole life and is most intimately bound up with all their social and domestic activities. For religion long before it becomes a cult or a creed is a mental outlook and a mode of life. As such it shows itself not in the working of any one instinct but in the directing and focussing of all the instincts towards certain well-defined ends. These ends tend, as it were, to recede as man advances until in the religions of the higher culture they become concentrated in the holy will of an eternal God. The way to this is a long and painful one, but it represents the normal development of powers that cannot otherwise find expression. These powers are native to man as man. It is true, no doubt, that certain stimuli from without, physical or otherwise, are needed to excite or develop them. But this shows the working of a double process, one both objective and subjective, the recognition of which is necessary to any full understanding of religion.

This is well illustrated by the study of such a phenomenon as conversion in religions of the higher culture. Conversion is not, of course, confined to the religious sphere. Something strictly analogous to it is found in connexion with poetry and art. It belongs generally to the adolescent period, though it is by no means unknown at other stages in human life, and when it takes place after adolescence is over is generally more violent in its onset and more drastic in its results. We are here, of course, concerned mainly with its religious aspects, but one result of

the psychological investigation of religious conversions is to show their close affinity with those sudden awakenings of interest and of capacity, those revelations of hidden powers that often mark a decisive period in the development of men of genius or of exceptional abilities. Such awakenings are as a rule by no means so sudden as they seem. There is generally a subconscious incubation of the forces then let loose, and the loosing of them, often occasioned by external circumstances, gives poise, direction, and harmony to the whole personality. It represents a new start in experience, and that on a higher stage than hitherto has been possible.

Religious conversion is in practically all cases preceded by a condition of dis-ease and dissatisfaction which often amounts to acute mental and spiritual distress. The whole personality seems to be disintegrated. Life is aimless and therefore useless, and there is an unconscious urge towards unification, harmony, and wholeness. What theology describes as a sense of sin is nearly always present, and the conversion process is seldom complete apart from a welcome conviction of divine forgiveness. It must be remembered that this condition of unrest is often intensified and generally conditioned by bad, morbid, and mistaken religious education. Children who have been brought up to fear an angry and vengeful God, and whose lives have been made miserable by the danger of committing artificial sins, to say nothing of the unpardonable sin, are never likely to have a normal and easy passage into religious maturity and

peace of mind. Indeed it may be safely said that both the alienation from religion which is so common to-day, and the morbid and extreme religious fanaticism which is its opposite pole, may be put down to faulty religious education and early religious impressions which are premature in their severity, if not altogether false. Among adolescents the sense of sin or unrest is very frequently connected with the strengthening of the sex impulse which takes place at this period in life. Here, again, a wrong-headed attitude of reticence, repression, and prurient shamefacedness on the part of adults works untold mischief with the young. Puberty, instead of standing for enlargement and emancipation, becomes a time of morbid fears and self-reproach, of vain struggles and a constant sense of defeat. We are concerned with it here only as one of the factors in the conversion process, but the whole subject calls aloud for saner methods in sex education and for a new scale of moral values in regard to sex in general. There is much truth in the contention of Freudian psychologists that religion and sex are closely bound up together. In many cases of conversion it is shown conclusively that religion is a powerful agent in the sublimation of sex, and in redirecting sex impulses into new and higher channels.

Whatever be its immediate cause, however, the preliminary stage in the conversion process is marked by this sense of discontent and incompleteness, and the only possible way of escape from it is in the expulsive power of some new affection, in a redirecting of the

personality on some end, higher, fuller, and more satisfying than any as yet achieved. There is no doubt that all this represents an unconscious process, and the act of conversion is marked by bringing the morbid condition out into the open. It represents a liberation of stored up energy and a reorientation of life on a new and higher level. The psychological investigation into these processes can throw a great deal of light on them. It enables us to understand their working, the part played by the various factors involved and the changes in character, outlook, and direction of life to which the process ultimately leads. It gives good reason also for the conclusion that, among all the forces concerned in conversion, religion is far the most powerful, and that the deeper the religious emotion and the higher the religious ideal involved the nobler and more lasting will be the result. But when all this has been done the central mystery remains. Analysis of the conversion process can no more explain it than dissection of a dead body can explain life. The problem of the ultimate cause and issues of conversion remains when psychology has done its best or worst. Cases of religious conversion are as a rule accompanied, indeed very often brought about, by a profound conviction that the Spirit of God is co-operating in the experience. 'It is the Lord's doing and it is marvellous in our eyes' is the unanimous confession of the converted. They feel that they are not left alone to struggle out of their bonds. Hands are stretched out to help them and guide them along

the new way. This conviction psychology can take note of and must reckon with as part of the mechanism involved. But it can go no further. To argue that 'we may look forward to a day when psychology will have proved that there is no more need of the grace of God to explain conversion than of Jupiter to explain thunder', shows a complete misunderstanding of the true province of psychology and a wilful blindness to the real issues. The question as to the reality of the object or objects of religious experience cannot be solved by psychological methods. It is on all fours with the problem of the reality of the objective world. If the one is a legitimate inference from experience, so perhaps is the other. In either case we have nothing to go upon but the evidence of our senses, and this may be as reliable in relation to the unseen and eternal as to the seen and temporal. In religious experience, and particularly in the experience of conversion, we have a large common element both in the content of the experience and the results achieved which seems to exclude the idea that the whole thing is based on illusion. If the real is the rational, then religion has at least a *prima facie* justification for her claim to be in touch with reality. The results achieved by the conversion process, in spite of many abnormalities and emotional excesses, are on the whole such as to justify the assumption that 'this thing is of God'. Anything which tends to stabilize the life of a man, to deliver him from narrow, selfish, and vagrant aims, and to redirect him on a course of service and self-

sacrifice, brings with it its own justification and verification. From what we know of the nature and working of illusions and hallucinations we can be sure that they do not produce results of this kind. A conversion which begins and a religious experience which perfects this kind of good work in a man may fairly be assumed to have behind it that which is at once rational and real.

Among the more positive results of the psychological study of religious experience is the contribution it has been able to make to religious education on the one hand and to therapeutics on the other. It must not be supposed that religious development is always marked by a conversion crisis sudden or otherwise. The process by which the religious awakening comes about may be a very gradual and even unconscious one. There is such a thing as salvation by education, and, as we have already seen, conversion in its strictest form is often conditioned and determined by previous education in religion. The study of child psychology has made great advances during the last few decades. It has already revolutionized educational methods and is preparing the way for yet greater changes. But the application of the psychological method to religious education still tarries, and at present there is no more pressing need. Children are very amenable to religious teaching. The aims, ideals, and sanctions of religion appeal to them almost naturally, and they respond to such appeal even though it is cast in the crudest and most unsuitable forms. There can be little doubt that of the indifference to and

alienation from religion which is so common to-day a large part is due to mistakes and extravagances in religious teaching both in the home and in the school. To the same cause also must be put down a large crop of religious aberrations in adolescence and later. Psychology has done good service here. It enables us to distinguish between various stages in a child's mental and moral development and so ensure that the religious teaching given at any one stage shall at least not be beyond the child's capacity and shall contain nothing which it will afterwards need to unlearn. It should also make it possible to distinguish between the normal and the abnormal in any individual temperament and to avoid over-emphasis on the emotional on the one hand or on the intellectual on the other. There are many interesting parallels between the religious development of a child and that of primitive man. The same psychological conditions are present and the same factors at work. Some knowledge of this will make it possible to avoid the mistakes which are only too common and ensure for children a natural and easy passage through the stormy waters of adolescence into the comparative calm of adult religious experience. But the work needs to be done with full knowledge of the psychological situation, and with keen insight into the mentality of children and with a deep sympathy for their moral sensitiveness. It should always be remembered that

'the religion of boyhood and girlhood is such as suits this particular stage of human development. It is not the

religion of the adult cut down to smaller proportions: nor is it the religion of the kindergarten upon a higher scale. It consists of learning the *ideas* of the Christian faith and the ways in which these ideas may be worked out in life, i. e., in the life of boys and girls. Each has to be guided to find his own way of practical religion, for each boy and girl differs from all others.'[1]

This, no doubt, imposes a very heavy task upon teachers, but it is one which will amply repay their efforts in a saner and higher all-round development of those entrusted to their charge.

There yet remains the question of the relation of psychology to the art of healing and its reactions upon religion. Here, again, many expectations have been raised that so far are not being fulfilled. A few years ago psychotherapy by analysis and suggestion had an immense vogue, and was hailed as ushering in a new era in medicine and even in philosophy. Men like Coué and Baudoin and the followers of the New Nancy School with their new revelation of the functioning of the subconscious mind, the power of autosuggestion and the law of reversed effort, captured the interest and stirred the imagination of the educated. They claimed, or it was claimed for them, that their teachings under the method of psycho-analysis would effect the renovation of psychology, medicine, and education, and in conjunction with the teaching of Bergson would renovate philosophy also. We hear but little of such claims

[1] *Psychology and the Church*, p. 153.

to-day, though we may admit that the methods of psychotherapy have greatly enhanced our conception of the power of mind over body. Mental healing is a reality, and psycho-analysis in the hands of competent physicians has become a recognized method of treating certain types of nervous disease. Its presuppositions, however, are largely determinist, and it tends to regard human personality as a mechanism all of whose processes could be explained if all the relevant data were known without any reference to spirit or a spiritual world. But it is just this conclusion that modern psychology seems to render almost impossible. Religion is not explained by being explained away, and the psychological investigation of the religious consciousness and of religious experience has demonstrated the naturalness of religion to man and its power in stabilizing man's nature and ordering his life. From the purely subjective standpoint religion has a very definite effect on man's physical and mental well-being. Indeed it may be confidently argued that it provides just that additional source of power which psychotherapy needs in order to make it effective. It is a most important factor in that psycho-synthetic process which must follow psycho-analysis if the last state of the patient is not to be worse than the first. It represents the treatment, while analysis represents the diagnosis. A certain American mental specialist once said, 'As an alienist and one whose whole life has been concerned with the sufferings of the mind, I would state that of all the hygienic measures to

counteract disturbed sleep, depression of spirits, and all the miserable sequels of a distressed mind, I would undoubtedly give the first place to the simple habit of prayer.' This has been abundantly confirmed by other workers in the same field, and most Christian ministers who know their job have had experience of the quieting and healing power of faith in God and of the distractions and disturbances caused by the lack of it. Spiritual healing is a reality, and psychology is of great value in enabling us to understand the mental processes involved and the right method of handling them. This is not to reduce religion to a means towards certain hygienic ends. It is rather a demonstration of the fact that religion alone can so unify and reorganize the human personality as to produce that mental poise and sanity of outlook which are the essential conditions of a healthy physical as well as psychical development. In other words, if the *mens sana* is, as we surely now know it to be, necessary to the *corpus sanum*, we may be equally sure that the one condition of both alike is a personality unified by and centred on the faith in a living God.

We conclude, therefore, that religion has nothing to fear from psychology but everything to gain. The relation between them is but one aspect of the relation between religion and science and is no longer to be interpreted in terms of conflict and opposition. Religion has everything to gain from the scientific interpretation of the universe, and man has no need to be terrified by the astronomical point of view.

What psychology does is to interpret man to himself as a thinking being, help him to understand how he can think God's thoughts after Him, and so help in the long run to justify the ways of God to man.

III

BELIEF IN GOD

WE may now, perhaps, take it for granted that religion is native to man, universal in its scope and an essential element in his total reaction to the universe around him. Though it has assumed many and diverse forms in the course of human history, there is one aspect of it which sooner or later comes to the front and is fairly constant, viz., belief in a God or Gods. This belief, again, has a long history. It has worked its way up from the crudest animism, through anthropomorphisms, polytheisms, and idolatries, to a serene faith in a personal God, all-loving, all-potent, and all-good. At the present time, however, a great reaction against this final form of theistic belief is in process. It is customary to trace this reaction to the influence of what is known as modern science. It should, however, rather be put down to the credit of certain types of modern philosophy which purport to have grown out of or at least been influenced by the scientific interpretation of the Universe and of human life. This is, of course, quite another story. Scientists themselves are, as a rule, the first to admit the severe limitations of their method. Observation and experiment can carry us a long way, but cannot give us a final and complete interpretation of anything. Biology and psychology can add enormously to our knowledge of man's life and actions. They can tell us all about the how, but they leave us still facing the

mystery of the why, the whence, and the whither. We are here in the region of a metabiology or metapsychology, or, in simpler language, of a philosophy where the purely scientific method is no longer applicable, and which must be judged on its merits for what it claims to be and to do. That the new standpoint and outlook thus indicated necessitate the abandonment of many old and familiar positions both in philosophy and theology goes without saying. We must be prepared for a thorough clearing of the ground, and for the removing of many things that are shaken before we can begin to rebuild the things that remain on new and surer foundations. This problem of reconstruction is forced upon us by the new spirit, or by what has been called 'the acid of modernity', and on the solution of it depends, humanly speaking, the whole future of religion in the civilized world.

The confusion and uncertainty in which the subject is at present involved may best be illustrated by reference to certain popular discussions of it and attempts at solution which have occupied a good deal of attention of late. While these are all strikingly individual, they have at least this element in common, that the writers in question are deeply concerned with the idea of God, deeply convinced that the old interpretations of God and His relations with the Universe and mankind are no longer tenable, and deeply conscious that men and women still need the driving power of a religious motive if they are truly to fulfil their function in life and serve their kind.

The first of these writers is Mr. Julian Huxley, the

title of whose book *Religion without Revelation* indicates his line of thought in advance. He may almost be described as 'that most dangerous combination' a practical mystic. He is a scientist to his finger-tips, but at the same time intensely religious. But his religion is of a purely emotional kind. It is the fruit of his own individuality reacting in a characteristic way to the Universe around him, and such as makes it impossible for him either to conceive or feel the need of any objective personal deity. He will have nothing to do with the supernatural, and yet he finds in religion 'a way of life founded upon the apprehension of sacredness in existence'. He defines religion in purely subjective terms as 'the reaction of the personality as a whole to its experience of the Universe as a whole'. The essence of religion is in 'man's capacity for awe and reverence', and the objects of religion 'however much later rationalized by intellect or moralized by ethics, however fossilized by convention or degraded by superstition or fear, are in origin and essence those things, events, and ideas which arouse the feeling of sacredness'. He finds, then, an immense sense of relief in abandoning any idea of God as a supernatural being. He rejects with equal emphasis the philosopher's idea of God as the Absolute, and the plain man's notion of God as a Person or Super-Person. Yet behind and pervading all things is a power essence, or tendency which is the sum of all reality and the recognition of which seems to be necessary in order to give unity and coherence to human life. Yet this power itself is apparently

impotent. God does nothing in response to the needs of men. They may 'feel after Him, if haply they may find Him'. They must do so, indeed, in fulfilment of their own nature, but they can expect no response. Religion is without revelation.

In an earlier book Mr. Huxley states the more positive aspect of his theology as follows:

'In any case, I shall be more than content if I have been able to persuade you first that the term God, just as much as the terms Energy, say, or Justice, has a real meaning and scientifically-based sense. Second, that the idea of God has and will continue to have an important biological function in man as denoting an idea, organized in a particular way, of the whole of the reality with which he is in contact. Thirdly, that the physical and biological sciences, in discovering the unity of matter and energy, and the direction operating in cosmic evolution, have provided a real basis for what up till now have been only theological speculations. Fourthly, that psychological science, in revealing some of the mechanism of mind, is helping us to appreciate the value of so-called mystical experience, is laying a foundation for the proper spiritual training and development of human mind, and shows us how the idea of God may be efficacious as a dominant idea in the all-important process of sublimation. And finally that, since the scientific mode of thought is general and not merely local or temporary validity, to build a religion in its basis is to make it possible for the religion to acquire a stability, a universality, and a practical value hitherto unattained.' [1]

A somewhat similar position, arrived at from

[1] Huxley, *Essays of a Biologist*, p. 303.

different premises and stated in different terms, has recently been set forth by Mr. Middleton Murry in his book entitled *God*. To him religion in the usually accepted sense of the term involves an hypostatization of values, and God is the metabiological unity or focus in which the religious values are concentrated. But the hypostatization of values is a many-sided and complex process depending on the nature of the values conceived. Thus in Christianity the process issues in the emergence of three Gods—the God of values, the God of immediate experience, and the incarnate God. None of these, however, represents reality. They are creations *ad hoc* and must be superseded by a more scientific conception. It is not easy to discover just what scientific idea of God Mr. Murry has to put in place of those he rejects. To speak as he does of a metabiological unity in the Universe corresponding to a metabiological unity in ourselves carries us nowhere. Mr. Murry draws largely on his own experience and on his own interpretation of values. But as he rejects the religious experience and religious values of others, even of Jesus Christ, as serving no really useful function and having no objective validity, there seems no good reason for accepting his own individual standpoint as in any sense more reliable. He writes in a spirit of great sincerity and even earnestness, but the conclusion he reaches is entirely personal and subjective. For example, he says:

'Religion in the accepted sense of the word depends upon the hypostatization of values: that is, their detach-

ment from the significant variations in which they emerge, and which they are. God is the focus in which the whole galaxy of detached values is concentrated. This God is necessarily unreal: he is an intellectual and imaginative fiction, necessary, as we have tried to show, as a medium for intellectual response to the variations in which the values he incorporates once actually emerged. He is a means for securing values against their disappearance into the biological flux and for enabling men, at a certain level of metabiological development, to incorporate those values in themselves.' [1]

This means that God, though unreal and even non-existent, may yet be used. He becomes a factor in the developmental process, a ladder by which man may climb, and which he may kick away from under him when he has reached a certain stage in his progress. In other words man becomes the measure of all things; himself the centre of his Universe and the sum of his strivings. This is, of course, a very old story, and it may be doubted if the modern dress in which it is here clothed will make it any the more credible or acceptable. On almost every page of his book Mr. Murry unconsciously testifies to the truth that man is a dependent being to be measured not by his grasp but by his reach, and always reaching out to something greater and surer than himself. Mr. Murry is conscious that the naturalism which he advocates presents rather a bleak outlook. It involves the sacrifice of the ideal to the real, and man as an ideal forming animal is not easily persuaded that

[1] p. 211.

the sacrifice is required of him. The paradox of Naturalism, says Mr. Murry, involves a change in consciousness:

'which is the equivalent of a religious illumination: more, it is a religious illumination. It is implicit in all those statements of religious realization which have maintained themselves. But the change in consciousness is also the realization that those statements are metaphorical and that every age must find a new method of foundation. It is the realization that mankind has reached a stage in which absolutes and eternals are not required: men can do without them. When men can do without such luxuries, then it becomes their duty to do without them, and they will find themselves not poorer but richer for the willing and sacrifice.' [1]

This again is finely said, though it involves a radically false estimate of man's present attitude and outlook. It may be true that men are not and never have been greatly concerned about an abstract absolute or external. But this is not to say that they are or have been indifferent to the great postulates of religion or to their need and conception of a living God. This is the normal need of the human spirit, a thirst that cannot be quenched by the dry dust of metaphysical speculation. If it is not too unkind a suggestion, it would seem that Mr. Murry's attitude is very much that of the Indian fakir who spends his days in the contemplation of his own navel. In so doing he finds, no doubt, a certain satisfaction and a sense of superiority over the common herd. But it

[1] p. 306.

goes without saying that his religion is not for them.

A third and still more interesting representative of this modern spirit is to be found in Mr. Walter Lipmann, whose *Preface to Morals* has become the Bible of a new faith called scientific humanism. On the basis of it has been founded a new Church without God, or prayer, or worship. Its motto, it has been rather cruelly suggested, might almost be There is no God and Walter Lipmann is his prophet. Here, too, we have Auguste Comte's religion of humanity clothed in attractively modern garments and advertised with great skill and wistful assurance as the last word in religious experience and adventure. The 'acids of modernity' have dissolved popular religion with its providential government of God and plan of salvation and have substituted for it a religion conceived as 'the art and theory of the internal life of man'. Instead of the salvation which the older religions offer, men must seek a salvation which consists in achieving a certain quality and harmony of the passions by conversion, education, and self-discipline. The goal of all human effort may be expressed in the maxim of Confucius, 'to follow what the heart desires without transgressing what is right'. This higher religion, or 'religion of the spirit', has no thesis to defend.

'It seeks excellence whenever it may appear, and finds it in anything which is inwardly understood: its motive is not acquisition but sympathy. Whatever is completely understood with sympathy for its own logic and purposes

ceases to be external and stubborn and is wholly tamed. To understand is not only to pardon but in the end to love. There is no itch in the religion of the spirit to make men good by bearing down upon them with righteousness and making them conform to a pattern. Its social principle is to live and let live. It has the only tolerable code of manners for a society in which men and women have become freely moving individuals no longer held in the grooves of custom by their ancestral ways. It is the only disposition of the soul which meets the moral difficulties of an anarchical age, for its principle is to civilize the passions, not by regulating them imperiously, but by transforming them with a mature understanding of their place in an adult environment. It is the only possible hygiene of the soul for men whose selves have become disjointed by the loss of their central certainties, because it counsels them to draw the string of possessiveness out of their passions, and thus by removing anxiety to render them harmonious and serene.' [1]

This long description of the methods and aims of the new religion may lack something in clearness, but it is possible to read between the lines and discover the direction in which it points. Man must be his own God and his own power unto salvation. If only he tries hard enough he can by his own efforts conquer his lower self and lift himself by his own waistband into that higher region of living which is his proper home. The only God he needs or can recognize is the ideal of his own perfection. This is at once the standard by which he judges and the incentive which

[1] *Preface to Morals*, p. 327.

spurs him on. There is something of stoic austerity and nobility about the position thus outlined, and it will appeal as such doctrine always has done to the elect few. But it is a philosophy rather than a religion. In the present distress and confusion of mind it may offer a way of escape to those whose problems are mainly intellectual, but it is no gospel for the multitude and has little or nothing to say to those who are burdened with sorrow or sin. It lacks dynamic, and self-realization is no fit substitute for the power of God unto salvation.

At the same time the writers above mentioned and others like them are doing good service in diagnosing the present situation, and in quite unconsciously suggesting the lines along which the remedy must be found. The one feature which they have in common is their obsession with the idea of God and their concern to find some substitute for those popular and traditional conceptions which they agree are obsolete and must be condemned. Whatever may be thought of the success of their efforts, the efforts themselves at least testify to the essential importance of the idea of God to the welfare of man and to his understanding of himself and his universe. It is obvious that the belief in God holds the field and functions. But to say that and nothing more is no solution either of the human or of the theistic problem. It is compatible with mere subjectivism on the one hand and with naked superstition on the other. Everything depends on the kind of God who is the object of man's faith and on the quality of the faith by which he is

approached. To these two questions we must now address ourselves.

The study of the development of religious thought reveals the impressive fact that man has never for long been satisfied with merely abstract and general ideas of the divine. If he has discovered at the heart of things an order, or tendency, or set of values, he has gone on to connect it with, or interpret it in, terms of a spiritual being or beings. While at first the animistic outlook is universal and means no more than the belief in certain supernatural potencies that may be made available for men, the tendency to invest these powers with personal qualities and to hypostatize them as living beings is a constant factor in the evolution of religion. Equally constant is the drift towards conceiving them as representatives of a spiritual or supernatural unity underlying them all. From this is but a short step to summing them all up in one, first supreme, and ultimately sole, spiritual Being to whom alone the name God is appropriate. In all religions of the higher culture this Being is conceived in personal terms as capable of communion with human persons and possessed of those moral and other qualities which we associate with personal life. Now it is only along the lines indicated by this historical approach that belief in God can be justified to the modern mind. The time honoured arguments for the existence of God, ontological, cosmological, teleological, and the like, can no doubt be usefully restated in modern terms, but too much is apt to be claimed for them. Their cumulative effect is im-

pressive, but at best it can give us only an ultimate, a first cause, an ordering and purposive intelligence. In other words, the Universe is interpretable to mind and suggests an original creative mind to account for it. But this is a very long way from the conception of a personal God and is compatible both with a deistic and pantheistic interpretation of things. The only really effective argument for the existence of such a god is that which is derived from man's own nature. His own intelligence impels him to try and make sense of the Universe, and so to discover in it a spiritually directive intelligence. His moral consciousness requires the conservation of certain great moral values, and this is best secured by the hypothesis of a living God in whom moral personality reaches its highest point. By nothing less than such a god can man's deepest moral and religious needs be satisfied. Human personality reaches its fullest and clearest expression through contact with other personalities. They are necessary to its functioning and even to its very existence. There is that in man which urges him outside himself and seeks a satisfaction which he cannot find on his own level. Only in communion with a personal God are his deepest needs fulfilled and his personality clarified and quickened and directed on its true end. It is therefore quite natural that the historical development of religion should have gradually led men away from all abstract and impersonal ideas of God to a God approachable, knowable, and capable of entering into living relations with his creatures. Man seeks a God

with whom he can enter into intercourse in much the same way as he can with other human persons, and who is at the same time the Eternal Spirit in whom we all 'live and move and have our being'. As F. H. Bradley says: 'The real presence of God's will in mine, our actual and literal satisfaction in common, must not in any case be denied or impaired. This is a religious truth far more essential than God's "personality", and hence that "personality" must be formulated, no matter how inconsistently, so as to agree with this truth and to support it'.[1]

It may be freely admitted, however, that the acid of modernity eats its way pretty deeply into arguments of this kind. The modern mind is obsessed by the mechanistic view of the Universe and of human personality. Indeed the strictly determinist outlook to which it finds itself committed leaves no room for personality in any intelligible sense of the term, and therefore to attribute it to God is an obvious *ignotum per ignotius*. At the same time if the mechanistic solution is pressed to its logical conclusions we have in the Universe and in human beings machines which in their initiative and purposiveness present all the qualities of minds. The very qualities which are characteristic of a machine, 'law, order, duty, and restraint, obedience, discipline', are mental qualities and point to a creative and ordering mind. A self-created and self-regulated machine is a contradiction in terms, and no machine that was ever made can do other than its maker intended or thwart his purpose

[1] *Truth and Reality*, p. 433.

in making it. This alone would seem to rule out man from the machine category. Even though he was made in the image of God and for the ends of God, he still retains the power and the right to go his own way and do despite to the will of his creator. However closely he may be hemmed in by the circumstances and conditions of his earthly life he still knows that he is free and in the consciousness of his freedom he finds his personal individuality. From this it is but a short step to the idea of a God who fulfils in the Universe the function that a human person does on the narrower stage of a human life. As Professor Tennant says:

'Personality can be conceived as divested of conditions and limitations that are specifically human, and the resulting concept may then be relevant to the Deity without being exhaustive of the divine nature. If no more than transcendence such as this is meant by "supra-personal", theism can appropriate that term. But if it connotes something essentially different from all that we mean by human personality, such as agency that is non-volitional, non-purposive, and non-ethical, the expression becomes a synonym for "impersonal", and must be rejected. For "God", as used by theism, is not a name for universal reason, ineffable being, or even for absolute morality or a tendency that makes for righteousness, but rather for a determinate spirit who is an artist and a lover as well as a geometriser, &c. Theism professes to be based on indications, apart from the satisfaction of religious experience, that God stands in "personal" relations with creatures which may literally be said to be partakers of the divine nature, in the sense that they possess the

potency of indefinite advance in fellowship and communion with Him.' [1]

Only the thought of and intercourse with such a God can give man the scope he needs, built as he is on a larger scale than that of this material world. Once abandon the idea of a personal God and religion is eviscerated of all real content. Prayer, worship, communion with God cease to be possible, and man is left contemplating his own perfections and ceaselessly striving to lift himself off his own feet. When he is told that his idea of a personal God is simply the creation of his needs and the projection of his phantasies on the curtain of the Universe, he remains unmoved. He knows that in his God he is in contact with the ultimate reality through which alone life and nature can become intelligible. Here, as elsewhere, he is prepared to trust his faculties and to believe what his own experience tells him as to the reality of the God who has become in himself the power of an endless life and the source of a moral and spiritual renewal. His religious life is the progressive verification of an hypothesis. As Professor MacMurray has said:

'Religion becomes for us the life of faith, the ceaseless infinite testing of our hypothesis in all the fields of human activity. For our hypothesis is too big for any final proof. In testing it we but create more experience to test. We can never escape from the need to trust our instinct and our intuition, unreliable though they may be. Even the physicist must do that. We must trust an unproved hypo-

[1] Tennant, *Philosophical Theology*, ii, p. 167.

thesis if we are ever to gather the material for its testing. This is our call to faith, to an adventure which by the continuity of a secular experiment is ever strengthening its claim to truth. For a faith that glories in its subjectivity glories in its shame. It is a cowardice and an egotism.' [1]

It must not be supposed, however, that man can be left to be contented with an idea of God that is no more than an emanation from his own religious consciousness and needs. The older theologies drew a sharp distinction between natural and revealed religion. It is a mark of the newer religious thought to abolish that distinction or, if it is retained, to see in the two types of religion two sides or aspects of the same thing. It is not enough to suggest that there is some objective reality corresponding to man's religious ideas and aspirations or even that this objective reality takes a personal form. The real question is as to whether men seeking God are but 'children crying in the night and with no language but a cry'; or whether there is some answer to their cry. In other words, Does God do anything and can He in any way respond to the desire of His creatures? The answer is in the affirmative. God hath never left Himself without witness. Even the dimmest gropings of man after Him have been not wholly spontaneous and self-originated, but have been stirred and kindled by the spirit of God Himself, and have brought the seeker in touch with spiritual forces that have reacted powerfully upon him and led him on by slow degrees

[1] *Adventure*, p. 215.

to deeper and fuller apprehension of the truth. When we have given full weight to the influence of custom, environment, and man's natural flair for religion, we have still to reckon with the belief in a revealed will and guiding hand of God. This belief has been a constant factor in religious progress and has grown with man's advancing intellectual and spiritual development. Neither fraud nor illusion can account for it. These things do not permanently influence men for good. That God has met such men half-way and that they have known it, has to be taken into account in any estimate of the relations between them.

There is, of course, a sense in which Nature is the garment we see God by, and in interpreting it we think His thoughts after Him. But it is in man that the fullest revelation of God is found. He speaks to men in divers portions and in divers manners. Prophecy is the greatest thing in religion and the core of prophecy is a Thus saith the Lord. The prophetic element in religion is unintelligible save on the basis of something given, an authentic word of God to the soul, startling it into new knowledge and fuller life. That holy men of old spake as they were moved by the spirit of God witnesses not only to their special capacity for receiving the message, but also to the objective reality of the message received. The theology of Karl Barth with its passionate insistence on the otherness of the Divine and on the givenness of revelation is more than a mere reaction against subjectivism. With all its defects—and they are

many—it does good service by insisting that the centre of gravity in religion is in God's claim upon man rather than on man's claim upon God.

> Let me no more my comfort draw
> From my frail hold of Thee,
> In this alone rejoice with awe
> Thy mighty grasp of me.

Those who agree with the contention that the real experts in religion are the saints will have no difficulty in regard to the objectivity of revelation or the reality of the 'Thus saith the Lord'. The unanimity of the saints is here too impressive to be ignored. In regard to the content of revelation many objections are removed by the indispensable canon to the effect that when God speaks to man He speaks in language that man can understand. As Luther put it in his crude way: 'When He speaks to the childhood of the race He babbles'. All revelation is historical, history being at once its measure and its vehicle. And it is therefore progressive and educative, fitting itself to man's ignorance and leading him on towards the light. For, once more, revelation is always purposive and can only be rightly understood in the light of the end which it seeks to attain. This is more than the imparting of knowledge, else religion were mere gnosticism. It is rather the gift of life, of a life fuller, higher, and more abundant than that which we now live in the flesh. All the great organized religions offer salvation to their votaries. Christianity stands distinguished from them all by the kind of salvation

it envisages and the means given for attaining it. In Christianity revelation culminates in incarnation. The word is made flesh, and God's communication with man focussed and made intelligible in a human life. The result is the birth of a new humanity wherein the power of God is manifested delivering from sin and opening up new and larger avenues of life. The core of the Christian message is that God was in Christ. The acknowledgement of this has meant for men and women a transformation of all moral and spiritual values and a definite release from the bondage of the lower self. This is a subject which will be dealt with more fully later on. Meanwhile suffice it to say that in Christianity we have the culmination of that living experience of God's truth and will which always constitutes the essence of religion. This experience of a divine human relationship has proved itself by its effect on life, and is the surest evidence of the truth and reality of that which lies behind religious belief.

The human side or aspect of this relationship is Faith, the organ of religion, the faculty by which values are apprehended, 'the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen'. Religious faith is compounded of belief and trust. It has its intellectual side and its conative. It works as well as interprets, but by its works chiefly is it known. There is such a thing as a will to believe, but belief is far more than a matter of will. The attitude or the self-expression which we call faith involves the whole personality, is a natural and characteristic element

in all human relations, and leads a man out beyond this material world to the world of the ideal and eternal. When the religious man says: 'we walk by faith, not by sight', he is merely stating what to religion is a truism. It is by faith that men realize such values as truth, beauty, and goodness, discovering their power and proving their utility. The method of faith is that of the hypothesis and its motto, *solvitur ambulando*. There is here a faculty, capacity, experience, call it what you will, that belongs somehow to our make-up and is the key that opens the door to a wider world than that governed by our senses. William James speaks of a 'mystical germ' which in him makes response whenever men speak of God, and which 'creates believers'. So in the average a reasoned and confident trust in God not only helps to make sense of the Universe, but gives power, stability, and direction to life. If it be true that any repression of our natural powers, faculties, or instincts, works mischief, then surely a life without the exercise of faith is likely to be narrow, barren, and impotent. Faith is the great interpreter enabling us to see this present world *sub specie eternitatis* and assuring us of the fact that spiritual things can be spiritually discerned. That there is an element of feeling in it goes without saying, but it is feeling that has a rational basis and verifies itself in action and experience. No psychology of faith, no resolving of it into its complex mental factors can ever explain it away or make it cease to function. Without faith man remains truncated and bereft, with it he can move mountains. It

is by faith that explorers, pioneers, and discoverers in every realm of human thought and action are animated and directed. And it is this same faculty which makes the search for God something more than the following of a phantom and drives the seeker onward to his goal. As Dean Inge has said:

'Faith transcends experience: it appears as a constructive activity. It employs the imagination to fill out what is wanting in experience. Faith endeavours to find harmony in apparent discord and to anticipate the workings of the divine purpose. In a sense all thought may be said to transcend experience if by experience we mean sense perceptions; and Faith is not merely a function of thought but a basal energy of the whole man. It includes an element of will; and the office of will is not to register experience, but to make it. Faith, therefore, always contains an element of risk, of venture: and we are impelled to make the venture by the affinity and attraction which we feel in ourselves (through the infusion as Christians believe of a higher light and life from above) to those eternal principles which in the world around us appear to be only struggling for supremacy.'

IV

RELIGION AND ETHICS

THE relation between religion and character and the conduct of life has always been close and intimate. Man is a moral being able to say 'I ought' as well as 'I will' or 'I can', and religion has had much to do with defining the ought and supplying the sanctions which have made it imperative. But this is not to say that religion has always been moral or even that it has generally contributed to man's moral advancement. Many religious ideas and practices have been non-moral and some have been morally degrading. Men have made for themselves Gods after the devices and desires of their own hearts and then have pointed to the conduct of the Gods as excuse for their own misdoings. There is much to be said for the contention of Durkheim and the French sociologists that among primitive peoples religion was purely social in its intentions and effects. The preservation of the life of the family, class, or tribe, was the all-important end of life, and religion with its tabus, totemisms, and ceremonial became the most potent instrument in securing such preservation. It surrounded tribal custom and the whole life of the community with ghostly sanctions and prohibitions in such a way as to secure the individual against the risk of any anti-social behaviour. In this dim region religion and magic are identical and serve the same ends. They map out together spheres of

the permitted and the forbidden. Quite apart from the moral value of the acts involved, the fact of such sanction or prohibition did help to educate the moral sense and make it easier for men to subordinate their own immediate interests to those of the community. Here ethics and religion meet, for such disinterestedness or self-sacrifice for the sake of others belongs to religion at its highest. The two roads, however, do not always run side by side, nor is religion always in advance of ethics. Greek philosophers deplored the evil effect on the popular mind of stories dealing with the immoralities of the Gods. The Hebrew prophets, on the other hand, raised the whole standard both of ethics and religion by insisting on the righteousness of Yahweh and by calling men to a holiness that was ethical rather than ritual both in source and intention. But, as Schopenhauer has taught us, 'To preach morality is easy; to find a basis for it is difficult', and our contention here is that the ultimate basis of morality must be religion. It is only in religion that men can find the sanction for moral conduct and the power that enables them to pursue the moral ideal. The difficulty, generally speaking, is not to know what one ought to do but to know how to do it. Man is a dependent creature and his dependence is nowhere more evident than in his need of some power not himself which will enable him to do the thing he ought rather than the thing he desires. Love, ambition, patriotism, and the like are all potent incentives to morality, but in religion they are all summed up and intensified. Philosophical ethics

may show man the way, but religious ethics alone can enable him to walk in it.

The raw material of morality is to be found in those instincts most of which we share with the animal creation and which belong to the lower or purely physical side of our human nature. These in themselves are non-moral, but they can be moralized. There is nothing wrong, for example, in hunger, fear, or sex, but by the use we make of them they may become a savour of life unto life, or of death unto death. In the use of them we are guided, restrained, or impelled, by reason, the moral sense, or certain social considerations. These belong to our psychic or spiritual nature, and involve conscious and purposive action on the part of the ego or self. But the ethical problem here remains. It is not merely a question as to our power over these instinctive promptings, but as to how it shall be exercised—shall we yield to them, or restrain them, or repress them? Is there any one universal principle which we can apply in answering these questions, or must we live ethically from hand to mouth or solve our problems singly as they arise *ad hoc*? This, as we have seen already, is the real question at issue, and it has been answered in many different ways.

In Plato, for example, we have a conception of the moral good as ideal, unconditioned, and self-originated. In practice the moral ideal reveals itself in the virtues of wisdom, manliness, self-control, and justice. But in his system Plato never really relates the ideal and the actual in conduct or gets very much

farther than laying down a code of laws. Aristotle, on the other hand, is more activist, and his ethical system is merely a body of teaching concerning virtue. Man's beatitude consists in virtuous activity, and this is best attained through the doctrine of the mean. But as Albert Schweitzer says, 'Dogmatic treatment of the virtues is just as little ethics as gristle is bone'. Many more modern theories of ethics are purely utilitarian or hedonist. It was largely in reaction against such that Kant formulated his ethics based on the idea of a categorical imperative. The ethical is not a means but an end in itself. It originates in an inner necessity of our own nature and it belongs to the higher world order, though it undoubtedly has a useful aim and purpose. So he proposes two ethical ends for men, the perfection of the self and the happiness of others. The only really good thing is a good will, and men should act in such a way that their action may become a law for all. 'Act is such a manner', he says, 'that thou mayest employ human nature, equally in thy own person and in that of every other man, as an end in itself, never merely as a means.' The basis of it all is simply that sense of obligation which belongs to man as a spiritual being and issues in the categorical imperative. Kant, however, never gives any clearly thought-out reasons why the categorical imperative should be obeyed.

One of the latest attempts to construct an ethical system is that of Albert Schweitzer, whose ethic of reverence for life is set forth as containing all that

is good in other systems and supplying at once the motive and the ideal for conduct. He writes:

'The ethic of reverence for life proves its own truth by the way in which it comprehends and includes the most various forms of the ethical impulse. No ethical system has yet proved capable of presenting the effort to attain self-perfection in which man works on his own being without any action directed externally, on the one hand, and the activist ethic, on the other hand, in connexion and inter-relation. The ethic of reverence for life accomplishes this, and in such a way that it does not merely solve an academic problem, but brings with it a real deepening of ethical insight. Thought becomes religious when it thinks itself out to the end. The ethic of reverence for life is the ethic of Jesus brought to philosophical expression, extended into cosmical form, and conceived as intellectually necessary.' [1]

These words may serve as a convenient bridge to the next aspect of our subject, viz. the ethic of Christianity. The Christian religion stands apart from all others not merely in the perfection of its moral ideal, but in its claim to impart to men power from on high. Indeed, if it could do no more than reiterate the command 'Be ye perfect', it would become simply a counsel of despair. It is life and hope for men only because it brings with it power to become. By the exponents of Christianity, however, its ethical value and content is very seldom fully recognized. Time was when to preach an ethical gospel was the surest way of incurring the suspicion

[1] *Civilization and Ethics*, p. 255.

of unorthodoxy. In Scotland ethical sermons were condemned as 'a hash of cauld morality', while Lord Melbourne's complaint that 'things have come to a pretty pass when religion is allowed to interfere in the conduct of a man's private life' has had many echoes in this country. Men so easily follow the line of least resistance, and in religion this line is to emphasize creed, ritual, and worship at the expense of holy living. This was the sin of the Pharisees, and in modern times it finds ludicrous expression in some hymns and in confessions like that of the old negro, 'I'se done broke all de commandments, but thank de Lord I'se got my religion'. Christianity, like all other systems, must be judged by its fruits. Unless it produces a high achievement in character, service, and self-sacrifice, and makes for life and life more abundant, it fails. But the way to secure these ends is not by inculcating a new law, still less by conveying it in a series of donts and prohibitions, but by preaching a faith which works, by showing men the way and linking them up with the power which will enable them to walk therein.

The ethic of Christianity runs back into the teaching and example of Jesus Christ and finds in Him both its source and its inspiration. He was pre-eminently a teacher and his teaching had to do first and last with character and the conduct of life. Perfection, nothing less, was the aim He set before Himself and the goal to which He directed the eyes of His followers. The background of His teaching was Jewish legalism. This was His starting-point, and

He borrowed from it fully but went far beyond it. Against the traditions of the elders and the ancient sanctions of the law He set simply His own word. His 'Verily, verily I say unto you' constituted His authority, and for confirmation of it He appealed simply to the moral sense of His hearers. This remains still the final court of appeal, and in morals, at any rate, men will not listen to any authority that does not in the long run justify itself at the bar of the individual conscience. As a rule men easily acquiesce in the moral code of the community to which they belong. But they do so more or less consciously and they never abandon the right to rebel, and in case of a conflict of ideals within the community they make their own choice. Whenever a man follows the dictates of his own conscience against public opinion he may be condemned as foolish or mischievous, but his right to do so is generally not questioned. At the same time to recognize the authority of conscience is not to assert its infallibility. Like all other human faculties, conscience or the moral sense has developed and needs educating. The more conscientious a man is the more does he need Cromwell's famous warning, 'Think it possible that you may be mistaken'. Now, in the education of conscience, religion and the influence of religious personalities are most important factors. Religion plays a vital part in clarifying the moral sense, exalting the moral ideal, and challenging to more strenuous moral achievement. In this work the religious personality is all-important. But he does his work not by bludgeoning the consciences of

others, but through example and precept quickening them to new sensitiveness and responsiveness to his appeals. Both the Hebrew prophets and Jesus Himself were alike in this regard. Both made their appeal for a higher social and individual righteousness; they with their 'Thus saith the Lord', He with His'Verily I say'.

The question that now confronts us, however, is as to whether the ethical teaching of Jesus is to be regarded, like that of the prophets, as representing a stage in man's moral development or as to whether it is in any sense final either in its method or in its ends. Does it represent a moral situation which the world has outgrown, or is it still relevant and authoritative? It is generally agreed that the ethic of Jesus is inseparable from His religion. It rests ultimately on that new conception of God, of man, and of their relations which He came into the world to make known. Seeing that this is now widely discredited, it stands to reason that the ethic based on it is criticized as it has seldom been before. The grounds for such criticism are by no means wholly theological. Those who take the extreme eschatological view of the teaching of Jesus and regard Him as having been obsessed with the expectation of an imminent end of all things, and with a catastrophic vindication of His own messiahship, naturally assume that it is only an interim ethic with which He is concerned, and one therefore that cannot be regarded as relevant to our day. This is too big a question to discuss in any detail here. Suffice it to say that of late there has been a

distinct hardening of opinion against the extreme eschatological view. The eschatology of Jesus was what von Dobschutz called a transmuted eschatology. He used the language of the Apocalyptists without in any sense endorsing their expectations. In His teaching the Kingdom of Heaven is present as well as future, the reign of God spreading silently in the world. That this new order will require a new ethic is obvious. But there is nothing in the moral teaching of Jesus by itself to suggest that it is a mere stop-gap. He deals with principles rather than precepts, and envisages a new humanity in which a new social order and a new standard of duty develop side by side. If some of His teaching seems to be extreme and harder than flesh and blood can bear, that is not because it is intended for a temporary and exceptional condition of things, but for a new community, a kingdom which is not of this world. The perennial problem of the ethic of Jesus is as to its application in a sub-Christian society. It is far better understood as an ideal ethic than as an interims ethic, and as such must it be judged.

This challenge, again, men have not been slow to take up. It is argued in many quarters that the ethic of Jesus is not even ideal, that it fails to meet some of the most exigent demands of modern life, and that the type of character it produces is not the highest possible. Nietsche, for example, condemns it roundly as a slave morality, and others, following him, find it deficient in those more strenuous and pushful qualities which make for mastery over

circumstances and success in life. Such criticism has been given new point and emphasis in modern times by those who lay stress on self-realization as the true end of all human conduct and striving. The ethic of Jesus, with its urge to self-denial for the sake of others, seems to put self-realization quite out of court. Another and slightly contradictory type of criticism is that which condemns the teaching of Jesus as being too individualistic, as concerned with the development and deliverance of the individual soul rather than with the betterment of mankind at large. Now there is no doubt that very much in the teaching and practice of the Christian church during the long course of its history can be found to justify all these criticisms. It is always necessary, therefore, to appeal from organized and historic Christianity to Jesus Christ Himself. It is from His formative and original teaching, small perhaps in compass but capable of indefinite application, that the vast structure of Christian ethics takes its rise. All over the civilized world His teaching has entered into the warp and woof of man's thinking on the subject of conduct, and his behaviour is often unconsciously regulated according to the mind of Christ. Even where he criticizes and perhaps condemns the teaching as antiquated, there are certain of its fundamental principles which he never thinks of questioning.

In spite of the fragmentary nature of Jesus' teaching and of the doubtful authenticity of certain parts of it, we are justified in regarding it as a

coherent and consistent whole. It all springs from one root and works towards one end. The ethic, let me repeat, is inseparable from the theology. Its centre and essence is in a new doctrine of man, and that again runs back into a new doctrine of God. The appeal here is to the religious consciousness of Jesus Himself—holy ground where we do well to tread lightly. But at least we may point to His own experience of God as His father and to His sense of having received God's commission to seek and to save lost men as determinative both of His thought and action. In all His ministry He had a definite end in view, and He pursued it steadfastly, fully conscious of what it would cost. It all centred in His belief that all men were potential children of God, and infinitely precious in His sight. They were, therefore, worth saving, and no price was too great to pay to secure their salvation and restore them to that full sonship which they had often forfeited through their sins. This high estimate of the worth of the human individual in the sight of God is the key to the ethic of Jesus, and it is a key which unlocks many doors. At a time when social and racial distinctions were very marked, Jesus introduced a new standard of judgement which cut through the conventions and opened up to His followers a new world. His delightful treatment of children, His attitude to publicans and sinners, and His scorn for the religiously and morally superior, all point to a recognition of human values that was as new as it was strange. Even to-day men fail to rise to the ideal of Jesus in

this regard. They still judge men and women by the labels they wear rather than by their intrinsic worth in the sight of God. That worth on Jesus' own showing is incalculable. The very least of God's creatures is infinitely precious in His sight, and it doth not yet appear what he shall be. Peter the rude fisherman was an apostle *in posse.* Zacchaeus, the outcast, was a son of Abraham, and Mary Magdalene had in her the making of a saint. The Christian Gospel was in the first instance a gospel of hope because it made even slaves realize that they had a value far beyond their price in the market and so stirred them to a kind of *noblesse oblige.* In our modern world the temptation to lose sight of the individual and to minimize his importance is very great. We think, feel, and speak in terms of the community. The poor, the masses, the middle class, the upper ten, these we have always with us. A man is British or American, French or German, black or yellow or white, and judged simply as such. War is a great leveller and redistributes men in armies, regiments, companies, &c. They are destroyed in heaps, but the heaps consist of individuals. There is everywhere a tacit recognition of this fact. The poorest and most inefficient private in the army was said to do his bit, and doing it he justified his individuality. The great war novels gain their life and interest, not by chronicling the movements of great hosts and describing campaigns on the big scale, but by registering the loves, hopes, fears, and agonies of individuals here and there. They were caught

up in the vast machine and integral parts of it, but the last thing they will admit is that they are no more than cogs on the wheel, without either impulse, initiative, function, or end of their own. They will allow nothing to deprive them of that sense of individual worth and power which is their ultimate title to self-respect.

This recognition of the individual as an end in himself rather than a means has become a regulative principle in Christian ethics. It invests human nature with a status and a dignity of its own and has rendered for ever impossible even those forms of 'man's inhumanity to man' which have been consecrated by long usage. The knowledge of man's worth in the sight of God has wrought like leaven in human society. At long last it has abolished slavery under the Christian flag, it has raised the status of woman from being the chattel and plaything of man to that of an independent personality, and it is creating a definite public opinion against any form of exploitation of the weaker by the strong for industrial or economic ends. The social implications of such a doctrine are obvious and far-reaching. It works with explosive and revolutionary effect against the most strongly entrenched class prejudices and privileges. It brought modern democracy to the birth, inspired and directed the beginnings of the labour movement, and is responsible for every effort at human emancipation. Religion, in the form of this Christian interpretation of man, so far from being dope for the masses has proved itself a very

gadfly, stirring men and women to a divine discontent and showing them the way to larger freedom and a fuller life.

On the individual himself, too, this doctrine has not been without its effect. In the jargon of modern psychology it has delivered him from his chronic inferiority complex and given him a new poise and self-respect. Under certain conditions and limitations human nature can never appear at its best. Slave morality is always a low morality, and until they are inspired by hope, men are never likely to make very effective attempts either at self-development or self-reform. The revelation that man doth not live by bread alone, that he is planned on a larger scale than that of his body or of this material world, and that he has before him an eternal destiny, becomes at once a challenge to the best that is in him and a sure stimulus to moral effort and advance. It is again a question of *noblesse oblige*. Being what he is in the sight of God and of his fellows he can say on every incentive to evil, 'I am doing a great work. I cannot come down'. About this ideal of a fully-developed Christian character there is nothing either selfish or morbid. It is the aim of Christianity to produce a new manhood or womanhood rooted in a trust in and obedience to the holy will of God. Through his conscious dependence on God the Christian learns humility and attains that poise and restfulness of mind which creates the atmosphere in which alone the fruits of the spirit can germinate and grow. From the example of Jesus Christ he learns that no man

liveth unto himself, and that all the pains he spends on self-culture only contribute to making him more fit for the self-sacrificing service of others. In other words, the social implications of the individual Christian ethic are obvious and direct. Just as it is only in fellowship with others that a man satisfies the normal instincts and aspirations of his being, so it is only in a society reorganized on a Christian basis that he can find scope and opportunity for that higher conception of duty to his fellows which his Christian standing implies. In its earliest days the Christian church was but a simple fellowship of believers in Christ. If there is anything of an interim nature about Christian ethics, it is that at first its sphere of action was such a fellowship. The new estimate of human values and human relationships which this fellowship involved was meant to act as a leaven in society and indeed has done so from the first. Its application to modern social and industrial conditions is, no doubt, a task of unexampled difficulty, but one which the Christian church is bound to attempt or perish.

The close relation between religion and ethics to which Christianity bears witness is nowhere seen more clearly than in the interpretation of moral evil as sin. Of the gradual development of this idea from certain social and ceremonial tabus and of its ultimate interpretation as wilful transgression of divine commands we need not speak. It is perhaps an unfortunate thing that the mind of the church should have been so largely preoccupied with the origin and

propagation of sin as to overlook the fact that Christianity itself is far more deeply concerned with the practical task of overcoming it. At the same time some elementary idea both as to the nature and aetiology of sin would seem to be necessary in order to understand how it may be conquered or forgiven. Modern theories on the subject seem to centre in the belief that the raw material of sin is to be found in those instincts and appetites which we share with the animal creation and are sometimes spoken of as an entail or survival. As we have already seen, in themselves these instincts and appetites are innocent and non-moral, and it is our capacity for moralizing them, i.e. using them for good or evil, which distinguishes us from our animal kin. The instincts in themselves are quite innocent; we give them their moral valuation. They may all be used by us in such ways as to turn them into positive evils. The whole moral problem rests on the conflict between these animal impulses and those of our higher nature. Man learns to regulate and curb his natural propensities at first in the interests of the family or tribe; then perhaps at the bidding of a medicine man, priest, or God; then in order to secure his own safety and lest a worse thing happen to him. All this represents a certain rationalizing process and the subordination of selfish desires or impulses to the common good or to some higher end. From this it is not a very long step to a moral discipline regulated by conscience and having as its end the perfecting of character. To fail in this respect and to yield

consciously to the evil solicitations of the lower nature against the warnings of reason and conscience is from the Christian point of view to sin.

Here the Christian Gospel works in a twofold way. In the first place, by revealing to men the grace of God and assuring them of His willingness freely to forgive their sins on due repentance, it stirs within them the springs of a new hope and confidence, and relieves them from that sense of bondage and oppression which the consciousness of sin always involves. It is in this sense that 'the Valley of Achor becomes the door of hope', or that in St. Paul's words 'men are saved by hope'. In the second place, by bringing men into a new and living relation with God based on personal trust and gratitude the Gospel reinforces the higher powers of the personality and renders the struggle with the evil promptings of our animal nature less hopeless. The Christian religion is power to overcome. There is about it always a sense of victory and triumph. The moral catharsis involved in the work of salvation not only raises man's ideal, but also makes a measure of achievement possible.

It should be remembered also that what is true of moral evil is true also of physical. Pain, misfortune, sorrow, loss, all the 'slings and arrows of outrageous fortune', are not sheer evils, but may be a savour of life unto life or of death unto death, according to the way in which we receive them, or the use we make of them. One of the most remarkable things about man's moral nature is his capacity to turn evil to good ends and to make it a discipline of the soul.

Suffering which will warp, sour, and spoil one man will refine, soften, and ennoble another, and the difference is in their reaction to it. To be able to react to evil in such a way that it can become a minister of good and a means of moral catharsis at once differentiates us from the whole animal world and shows us to be possessed of a moral nature which is to that extent, at least, *sui generis*. There lies upon all men, therefore, a very definite obligation to use these powers of self-discipline to throw ourselves boldly into the struggle and to win out of it the prize of a fuller and richer life.

But the real question at issue is as to how this is to be done. As a rule it is not ignorance that men suffer from most, but impotence. They know roughly speaking what they ought to do, but the difficulty is how to do it. The higher the moral ideal the more they admire it, and the more they fall short of it. *Virtus laudatur et alget.* The Christian moral ideal is the highest possible and very exigent in its demands. If there were no more in it, it would be simply a counsel of despair. To tell men to be perfect is to mock at them. But Christianity differs from other ethical systems in containing a dynamic as well as a direction. It is best expressed in terms of life rather than of law or creed, and the new life which it imparts to men brings with it not only a new ideal, but power to become. It is thus that in Christianity, religion, and ethics are indissolubly bound up together. The gospel is the power of God unto salvation, and salvation is interpreted not merely in terms

of rescue and deliverance, but more positively in terms of a new life of personal holiness and self-sacrificing service of others. In the early church the dominant note in this new life was the note of power. Christianity was and always should be a dynamic lifting men and women above the tyranny of circumstances and giving to the weakest of them a sense of mastery and authority. The negation of Christianity is in the modern complaint that 'things are in the saddle and ride us'. Until men and women receive power from on high and are able to overcome both their own lower nature and the world around them, they cannot know what Christianity really is. As Professor Peabody has said:

'The teaching of Jesus ends as it began, by rejecting the self-satisfied, the self-important, the consequential, and accepting the poor in spirit, the childlike, the burden bearing: but His teaching does not end without imparting to those whom it accepts a new gift—the gift of power. It promises to the self-distrustful a new sense of capacity: to the crushed a new strength of resistance: to the insignificant a place in the world: to plain people a spiritual democracy: to the mourners the comfort of self-forgetting service: to the solitary the sense of companionship: to the poor in spirit the sense of the Kingdom of Heaven within. What all these and many more ineffective, effaced and hesitating lives most need is an assurance of significance, a sense of power; and their response to the ethics of Jesus is that of Paul, "When I am weak, then am I strong".' [1]

[1] *Jesus Christ and Christian Character*, p. 150.

The source of all this is for the average Christian a vivid consciousness of communion with God in Jesus Christ. By seeking to do His will, sharing His ideals, and thinking His thoughts after Him, men and women enter into a personal relationship with Him, the effects of which are immediately felt in a quickening of their whole personality, and a strengthening of their capacity for good. As in the days of His flesh, virtue goes out of Him into them and they are renewed in the spirit of their minds. Nothing in Christian experience is more universal or more surely felt. Christ becomes in His followers the power of an endless life, and the weakest of them can say, 'I can do all things in Him that strengtheneth me'.

We may argue, therefore, with some show of reason, that both religion and ethics have a common root in man's natural constitution and a common aim in that they contribute to his higher development. As a rational being man is impelled to control the impulses of his lower nature and to move not blindly but consciously towards an end which is other than mere self-gratification. Both morals and religion have very lowly beginnings, but they are to be judged not by these but by the highest of which they are capable. The goal of ethics is the true, the beautiful, and the good, but it has to be reached by a long and devious course. In pursuing that course the spirit of man is continually being reinforced by religion which serves the double purpose of clarifying his moral ideals and enforcing them with new and more powerful sanctions. Matthew Arnold described

religion as 'morality touched with emotion'. As a full account of the matter this is hopelessly inadequate, but it contains at least a suggestion of truth. Religion is more than morality. It inspires, sanctions, and directs man's moral strivings. Morality without religion is apt to fall to a low level of legalism and to lack incentive and power. Both are needed and each in its due place and proportion before man can hope to attain to the full development of his powers.

V

THE CHRISTIAN CONTRIBUTION

THE subjectivist view of religion, pressed to its logical conclusion, makes it no more than an emanation of man's consciousness, a fantasy invented to meet certain fundamental needs of his nature. In other words, it is a projection of his desires and instincts on the empty canvas of the universe and has no objective reality to correspond to it. Such a position is not only very difficult to defend on philosophical grounds, but seems also to ignore some of the most essential and conspicuous elements both in religious experience and religious history. Many of these may be said to run counter to man's desires and confront him with ideas and forces which tend to constrain rather than express him. Indeed the very word religion carries with it a connotation of restraint and even coercion. However man's belief in a God or Gods may have arisen, once attained it becomes a directive force in his life. The conviction that this power is real and that its claims to obedience are valid persists, and when it is once abandoned or conceived to be illusory, religion itself ceases to be or to function. Religious experience is experience of something or of somewhat, and the content of the belief is at least as real and important as its form. All the higher religions rest on a consciousness of something given as well as of something assumed. This is an hypothesis of which experience is the progressive

justification, and in no religion is this more evident than in Christianity, especially when Christianity is regarded as it always should be, as a life rather than a set of beliefs or a system of dogmas, or a ritual or an institution.

Christianity, then, is first and foremost historical. It rests on the life, action, and teaching of an historical person, Jesus Christ, who is at once its founder and its foundation. In Him at any rate there is something given—an objective fact which can neither be overlooked nor explained away. It is in this fact of Christ that Christians find the centre of their faith and the source of a divine revelation. As Herrmann says:

'God makes Himself known to us so that we may recognize Him through a fact, on the strength of which we are able to believe in Him. No doctrine of any kind can do more than tell us how we ought to represent God to ourselves. No doctrine can bring it about that there shall arise in our hearts the full certainty that God actually exists for us; only a fact can inspire such confidence within us. Now we Christians hold that we know only one fact in the whole world which can overcome every doubt of the reality of God, namely, the appearance of Jesus in history, the story of which has been preserved for us in the New Testament. Our certainty of God may be kindled by many other experiences, but has ultimately its firmest basis in the fact that within the realm of history to which we ourselves belong, we encounter the man Jesus as an undoubted reality.' [1]

But religion has to do with values as well as with facts, and it is in its valuation of the facts involved

[1] *Communion with God*, ii, p. 2.

that the real differentia of Christianity are to be found. Jesus Christ Himself as an historical Person stands for a certain new valuation of God, of man, and of their relationship. This He set forth to the world in terms of the culture, experience, and mentality of His day. But the truth itself is independent of and distinguishable from the forms in which it was cast and is patient of continual reinterpretation. The process is always a difficult one. Mr. G. K. Chesterton is said to have replied to the charge that Christianity had been tried and found wanting with the remark that Christianity had been found difficult and not tried. If this is true of the practice of Christianity, it is equally true of its theory. Men are still content to judge of it in certain of its obvious traditional forms, and to shirk the attempt to discover and restate its essence. Modern opponents of the faith are still chiefly concerned with attacking ancient dogmas or medieval superstitions, and when they easily capture these half-abandoned outworks imagine that they have penetrated to the central citadel itself. They have really done nothing of the kind. But they will not be convinced of the futility of their proceedings until the defenders of Christianity are content to abandon indefensible positions and take their stand on those essential Christian truths which are at once capable of reasoned expression and verifiable in the experience of life.

It is true, of course, that the search for the essence of Christianity is no new thing. It will continue as long as man continues to think and to be moved by

the religious impulse. Even when Christian thought has been most sophisticated and has hardened into authoritative dogma, men have never quite lost the power of distinguishing between the kernel and the husk. Christianity has shown itself extraordinarily adaptable. It has easily taken on new thought forms and found expression for itself in the language which could at the moment be best understood. This explains to some extent the curious variations in emphasis which have amounted almost to what might be called fashions in theology. At one time, for example, Christian thinkers have emphasized the transcendence of God, at another His immanence. Here the Incarnation has occupied, as it were, the centre of the stage, and there the Atonement. Now it is Christian experience which is the source of knowledge and power and now an objective divine revelation. But amid all these changes in the form or fashion of thought the centrality of Jesus Christ for Christian life and faith has never been altogether lost sight of. It is in terms of His Person and work and of the new values for which they stand that the essence of Christianity must be sought.

Of these new values the first and most important is that of God. Against the familiar Jewish background Jesus pictured God in homelier, more human, and more ethical terms than those familiar to His contemporaries. He filled the distinctive conception of the divine Fatherhood with a new content making it at once more individual and more universal. To Him God was not merely the God of the Jews but

of the whole human race, and His concern was not merely for the race as such but for every individual unit composing it. So His attitude to men was all compact of love and righteousness and gracious solicitude for their eternal welfare and a providential watchfulness over their needs. It may be that the Christian Church has never yet risen to the full height of this conception of God given in the life and teaching of Jesus. But dim and scanty though the presentation of it has been, it has proved its power in the recreated lives of multitudes and in its steadying and fructifying effects. The Christian has his answer to those who set the whole thing down as mere subjectivism and charge him with inventing a fantasy to meet his wishes and needs. The knowledge of God in Christ is for him something imparted rather than invented, and may be tested by its fruits. It is an hypothesis that is in process of verification and that meets every test to which it is put. It helps men to make sense of the universe as nothing else can, provides them with a moral incentive, and corrects the perspective of their lives. As Browning wrote long since:

> I say, the acknowledgement of God in Christ
> Accepted by the reason, solves for thee
> All problems in the earth and out of it,
> And hath so far advanced thee to be wise.

It is true that the argument from experience cannot carry us all the way. It has its limits and it stops short of logical demonstration. But it enables us to verify our hypothesis and gives us a basis for action.

It sets religious truth before us not as a conundrum offered to the intellect but as a mystery offered to faith. And faith is a kind of sixth sense by which we are enabled to say: 'We know and are persuaded'.

Jesus' conception of God as the Father of all men carries with it a new valuation of mankind. Men and women, too, are precious in God's sight for their own sake. They are of more value than many sparrows and always the subjects of God's providential care. Jesus came into the world to seek and to save the lost, and to pay the cost of their salvation in His own person. To Him the lost were worth saving and capable of being saved. In the most sorry and degraded specimens of humanity he saw the promise of something higher and better, and He would not 'break the bruised reed, nor quench the smoking flax'. There is an attitude here very different from that of later Christendom with its belief in original sin and the total depravity of the race. Men were regarded by Jesus as at least potential children of God and as capable of being brought back from the far country of their rebellion once they repented and desired to return. The parable of the prodigal son may not be the whole Christian gospel, but it is at least the best possible illustration of the spirit in which that gospel is conceived and preached. The attitude of Jesus to publicans and sinners was highly unpopular among the good people of His own day and has never been fully endorsed or imitated in the Christian Church. It has, however, provoked that enthusiasm for humanity which is one of the features distinguishing

the new world from the old. It gradually broke down the institution of slavery, it has inspired the movement for the emancipation of woman, and it will in the long run prove the most important factor in the abolishing of war. This new valuation of humanity wrought like new wine among the depressed classes of the ancient world, and despite all attempts to ignore it on the part of rulers, ecclesiastics, and aristocrats, it has never ceased to be a charter of human freedom and hope. Opponents of Christianity never made a greater mistake than when they characterized it as dope.[1] In the Protestant Churches at any rate it has had exactly the opposite effect. It has worked both as an explosive and a dynamic. It has stirred men to a new self-consciousness as sons of the living God, has caused them to revolt against inhuman conditions of life and to make full use of their privileges as kings and priests unto God. We are a long way yet from carrying to its logical conclusions this aspect of the gospel of Jesus Christ. To do so would produce social and political consequences of the most profound and far-reaching effect, such as neither the Church nor the world is as yet ready to contemplate. It must be remembered that, in comparison with other great religions of the world, Christianity is still a very young religion, and there is yet much to be done in the way of applying its principles under the conditions of modern life. There is a great experiment awaiting the Christian Church whenever she has the faith and courage to attempt it.

[1] See above, p. 83.

Like all other great religions, Christianity offers salvation to its votaries, and it may be distinguished from other religions by the nature of the salvation offered and by the means used to attain it. That He should save His people from their sins was at a quite early stage recognized to be the main object of the Messiah's coming. Jesus Himself seemed to accept this role and claimed the power to forgive sins. Thus the question of sin has always loomed large, in the opinion of many far too large, on the horizon of Christian thought. True, sin has often been confused with its consequences, generally much the most obvious and inconvenient aspect of it, and Christian salvation has been envisaged in terms of deliverance from punishment in a more or less problematical Hell. There has been much discussion, too, about bargains with the devil and about the pains and perils attaching to various forms of sin. In the history of the Church salvation has tended, generally speaking, to become mainly a question of 'safety first'. This tendency still persists, and however unworthy of the really Christian spirit, may at least be taken to testify to the very large place which the sense and fear of sin occupy in man's religious consciousness. It is simply not true to say that the modern man is not troubling about his sins. The fact is that he troubles about little else, though he may not formulate his trouble either to himself or to others in any recognizably theological terms. But he is well able to distinguish between sin and sins. While he has nothing but contempt for those who would charge him with

artificial and ecclesiastical sins which involve no moral issue whatever, he is painfully aware of that weakness of will which lays him open to the promptings of his lower nature and constrains him to walk by the flesh rather than by the spirit. That this involves a spiritual blindness and blunting of his higher susceptibilities and so something akin to what is called alienation from God, he is only too conscious, and the consciousness produces in him just that sense of nervous strain, that tragic aimlessness of spirit, and that internal dis-ease which together form so marked a feature in our modern life.

Ecclesiastical doctrine has in the past been far too ready to identify sin with the instincts and impulses of our animal nature. These constitute no doubt the raw material of sin, but sin consists in the use we make of them, not in the impulses themselves. Hunger and sex and acquisitiveness are in themselves innocent and without moral taint. We can either yield to them or resist them, and it is what we do with them that gives them their moral valuation. Man differs from the animals in the power he possesses of controlling and rationalizing his primitive instincts, and in the misuse and misdirection of this power sin emerges. The only way of escape from it is by the education and strengthening of his higher nature so that he may know when he ought to resist the appeals of the lower and with the knowledge may obtain power. Now all Christian experience goes to show that this knowledge and this power are available in and through Jesus Christ as nowhere else. It is quite

true that He came to convince the world of sin. Now, as of old, contact with Him constrains many to cry: 'depart from me, for I am a sinful man'. He sets before men a standard and an ideal which cannot fail to show them to themselves as they really are, and so quicken conscience and rouse to penitence. But if this were all, Christianity would be a message of despair rather than of hope. It is the almost universal testimony of Christians that, in and through Jesus Christ, God's power has been mediated to them, fortifying their higher nature and enabling them to overcome the assaults of evil and of the flesh. In other words, with the opening up to men of new values, Christianity also opens up new avenues of power clarifying their motives and strengthening their sanctions. It is in this sense that it substitutes for the law of a carnal commandment the power of an endless life. It introduces men to new and higher levels of experience, frees them from the domination of material things, and opens out to them an endless vista of spiritual progress. For the salvation that is in Christianity is no merely negative thing. It is salvation to something as well as from something. It looks to the future as well as to the past, and starts the renewed soul out again on the high road of quest and adventure. The goal is nothing less than the highest moral achievement on the one hand and self-sacrificing service on the other. The saved life is characterized by poise and a sense of proportion. It puts first things first and all others in their place, and is marked by a dependence upon God and a trust in His loving

care which removes worry and anxiety and stabilizes the life. On the objective side the Christian finds his true service of God in the service of man. Love of God and love of the neighbour go hand in hand, and life obtains new point and purpose by being focussed on the goal of doing good. This is the answer to the familiar objection that the teaching of Jesus is too individualistic and concerned merely with the saving of the individual soul. It begins there, no doubt, but it does not stop there. Jesus preached a Kingdom of God and prepared men to become sons of the Kingdom. And the Kingdom was no mere other worldly or apocalyptic dream, but a new order of society in which the will of God is supreme. As Bishop Gore says:

'The Christian ethics are social ethics through and through, and the social requirements guard the entrance to the final Kingdom—for did not Christ say, "Inasmuch as ye did it not", your brotherly duty, "to one of the least of these my brethren, ye did it not unto me, depart ye cursed". Thus the true Christian ethics is at once other-worldly and this-worldly. The Church is building a fabric which only eternity can complete. So it is other-worldly. But meanwhile the task of the Christian Church is to build the fabric of the true humanity so far as that is possible in this world. The materials for the future City of God are to be fashioned here.'[1]

But it must always be remembered that there is more here than a vague philanthropy, or what the author of *Ecce Homo* calls an enthusiasm of humanity.

[1] *Christ and Society*, p. 125.

Behind the social ethic of Christianity lies a dynamic which only Christianity can supply. A passion for social reform which is rooted in the love of God and man is a very different thing from a doctrinaire socialism, political or economic. In its social as well as in its individual application the secret of Christianity lies not merely in presenting men with an ideal but in giving them power to attain it.

So in this matter of salvation Christianity makes the initiative lie with God, and in this respect again differs widely from other religions. Nothing is more impressive in the religious history of mankind than the story of the efforts of men and women to win the divine favour and placate the divine wrath. The institution of sacrifice alone witnesses to the urgent and even frantic nature of this need. Men will even give of the fruit of their bodies for the sin of their souls, and count no price too high to pay if haply they may obtain the goodwill of God or of the Gods. In many of its forms both primitive and organized religion becomes little more than a vast system of propitiation whose prayers and ritual testify to a very impressive sense of need. Indeed these things are not altogether absent from Christian worship, where prayers are often addressed to God as though He were some far off reluctant potentate needing to be fleeched or cajoled into helping and regarding His petitioners. It ought not to be necessary to point out that on the fundamental Christian assumptions such an attitude is impossible and absurd. The God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ is no absentee Sultan,

careless of mankind, but one who waits to be gracious, and is more ready to help His children than they are to ask His help. The great Christian doctrines of Grace, Atonement, and Justification, however little they may appeal to modern men in their traditional forms, have behind them this fundamental Christian truth, viz., that the work of man's salvation is God's concern. He both initiates and carries it through. If sacrifice is required, then it is He who makes it, and all man has to do is to accept a blessing which he could never earn. There is something altogether unique and peculiar to Christianity in this conception of God, who gives men what they need and requires nothing at their hands but a trustful acceptance of His gifts. As Dr. Oman says of it:

'Here we find a truly personal relation to our Father with its gospel inseparable from its ethic, and its ethic inseparable from its gospel, with its moral independence always inspired by its religious dependence, and its religious dependence ever showing its vital force in our moral independence.' [1]

In this respect, however, as in so many others, Christians have seldom risen to the height of their great argument. The whole conception of God's free grace in Christ seems to hurt their pride, and they tend to surround it with conditions and force it into channels in such fashion as to limit both its freedom and its graciousness. It was this consciousness of God's grace as a personal relationship which wrought like

[1] *Grace and Personality*, p. 71.

new wine in the early Church. Without it Christianity is a despairing quest rather than a triumphant achievement. If ever 'the old glorious beautiful face of Christianity' is to be restored and its lost radiance recovered it will be by those who make the grace of God crucial both to faith and to experience.

But what of the central figure in all this system, that Person who is at once the source and guarantee of the gospel that bears His name. 'What think ye of Christ', is always the most pertinent query that can be put by, or addressed to, the Christian consciousness. From the very beginning men have sought such an interpretation of the nature of Jesus Christ as would help to justify the claims made on His behalf. The process is still going on and there is no sign of an end to it yet. Even those writers who start with the assumption that Christianity no longer counts, are curiously unable to dispose of its Founder. They seem almost to be obsessed by Jesus Christ and go on discussing Him while asserting in the same breath that He is no longer a living issue. They have killed Him so often and it is still true, as they said of old, that 'He could not be holden of death'.

This, however, is not the place to develop a Christology nor are we concerned to do so. At the same time we must admit that the Church has been right in showing herself very jealous for the honour of her Lord, however faulty may have been her methods in defending it. In the discussions on the subject which are still rife, all the features which have emerged in its historical development are still to be found. They

descend from the loftiest heights of metaphysical speculation to the crude materialism of the mass, and there are many stopping places on the way. If the process has resulted in any clear gain, this has not been so much in the way of assured conclusions, as in suggesting the right line of approach. It is generally admitted that speculation on the nature of Christ's person and on His relations with the Godhead can never carry us very far. Men begin to know Him best through what He has done for mankind and through their individual experience of His saving and sanctifying power. There is real pertinence in Melancthon's famous saying: 'Hoc est Christum cognoscere, beneficia ejus cognoscere, non naturas, modos incarnationis intueri.' To know the blessings which Christ brings, to experience something of the new freedom, joy, confidence, and self-respect which follow upon His revelation of God, and to enter on that life of obedience and fellowship to which He calls us, is the first step towards a reasoned apprehension of His nature and work. Two considerations have here to be borne in mind. First, that we approach the problem of the Person of Christ as those who assume an affinity between the divine and the human rather than an eternal contrast; and secondly, that we look for the uniqueness of Jesus Christ in His moral and spiritual rather than in any metaphysical attributes. This means that in the perfection of His human life we find something more than human. He has for men the religious value of God, not merely because of what He does for them, but because in His spiritual

insight and moral supremacy they discover in Him God manifest in the flesh. How this comes about it were better not to inquire too closely. All the theories of Incarnation, Kenotic, immanent, and the like, raise more difficulties than they solve. Men are not constituted believers in Christ by accepting any of them or even by assenting to the language of the creeds. The real believer in His divinity is not one who pays it lip service, but one whose whole religious experience is summed up in personal surrender to Christ as Lord, Master, and God. It is just because His humanity is so full and strong that He is able to mediate God to lesser souls. He became as we are that we might become what He is, and He reached His goal by the way of struggle and sacrifice through which He leads His followers. His sinlessness, for example, was no mere anaemic perfection which he could not help, a *non posse peccare* which removes Him at once from any real affiliation or even sympathy with ourselves. He was tempted like as we are and yet able to say as we are not, 'Get thee behind me, Satan'. He was 'above the battle', though not in the sense of one who was too proud or too timid to fight. As is said of Him in the Fourth Gospel, 'The Prince of this world cometh and hath nothing in me'. It is this sense of mastery which makes it so possible for Him to succour them that are tempted. There is no evading the fact that to multitudes of His followers Jesus Christ has been the source of such power and inspiration as to enable them to conquer even ingrained habits of sin and start life afresh on a new and

higher level. Fellowship with Him has meant contact with a moral and spiritual force that has renewed the springs of their own vitality and mediated to them power from on high. And this to them is the proof of the lordship of Jesus—not a mystical experience but an accomplished fact for which they can find no better expression than the familiar words: 'Whereas I was blind, now I see'. This is supposed to be an age of experts. In all departments of life men turn to those who have expert knowledge or skill for any help or advice they need. This practice is a sound one and might well be extended to religion. But let us be sure that we know who the expert in religion is. He is not the philosopher, or the scientist, or the popular novelist, or even the theologian, but the saint. That is the man who knows, and there is much force in the appeal of the old hymn, 'sed quid invenientibus'. It is not until men have been there and breathed the air for themselves that they can report truly on those mountain heights of vision, assurance, and victory that constitute the life that is in Christ.

But, once more, Christianity, like all other religions, has to face the supreme problem of evil, and by its success or otherwise in doing so will stand or fall. Instead of the pessimism, dualism, Stoicism, or fatalism which characterize most other religions, it confronts the world with an ethical optimism which, while it can justify itself at the bar of reason, is also a challenge to faith. To the Christian the world is a scene of discipline and is under the rule of a God who

wills the good of His creatures, a good which can only be won at the cost of struggle. In this conflict, evil both physical and moral is a necessary condition, and men and women are so constituted that they are able to use evil as a means and minister of good. Here they differ widely from the whole animal creation. It is true, as Whitman says, that 'cows do not lie awake at night and weep for their sins', but they are not to be envied on that account. They know nothing of the healing power of penitence, and when they are hurt must bear it as best they may. But with men it is different. Pain and suffering, whether mental or bodily, are just what we choose to make of them. They may either become a savour of life unto life or of death unto death. By suffering one man may become tempered, refined, and ennobled, while by the same suffering another may be hardened and spoiled. Everything depends on the use men make of the evil in their lot, and the capacity to use it and even turn it to good ends is the greatest and most distinctive thing in our experience. Now what men are thus able to do on the small scale of their individual lives, Christianity shows us God doing on the vast scale of the Universe. The problem of evil is, of course, only a problem to those who believe in a good and loving God. The necessary Christian corollary to this belief is that God, as it were, makes it His own business to deliver man from evil and 'to break the power of cancelled sin'. In this sense was the Lamb slain before the foundation of the world, and in the cross of Christ we have focussed in one vivid act the creative

and redemptive love of God—the power of an endless life. In Christianity we may not have a philosophically complete solution of the problem, but we have a practical method and an hypothesis in the working out of which at least a *modus vivendi* may be discovered. A religion which sets character before us as the supreme goal, which turns evil into a discipline and offers the free forgiveness of our sins, becomes to men in their moments of deeper vision a veritable door of hope. And the vision is one offered not to the eyes or the understanding, but to faith. It was said of Jesus Christ once in the days of His flesh that 'He did not many mighty works there because of their unbelief', and what was true then is true still. On man's side the necessary response to the action and revelation of God is faith. If obedience may be described as the organ of religious knowledge, much more faith without which obedience would be neither rational nor possible. There is a sense in which *credo ut intelligam* is still a reasonable motto for religious men. For faith it must be remembered is opposed not to reason but to sight. It is itself a kind of rationalization of the super-sensible world, for it implies not merely intellectual belief so much as moral trust and self-committal. Its method is that of the hypothesis. You take the objects of your faith for granted and go on to assume that they are as and what you believe, and in the process you discover whether your faith is justified. *Solvitur ambulando*, and there is no better way. The faith of a Christian, therefore, is not merely the acceptance of those things most surely believed by the

Christian Church, but a personal and living trust in God in Christ Jesus. It is thus a reorientation of the whole life of a man in this direction and under these auspices. It has a rational basis, but is attained by no merely rational process. It represents the mystical in all of us, and works by that intuition or second sight that brings instant conviction to him who experiences it, but of the truth of which it is so hard to convince others. Faith is thus of the very essence of religion. It makes possible that commerce of the soul with God which is the goal of all religious striving and whose power and reality none who have experienced it can question. It is not to be explained away as a compensation for our weakness or a projection of our desires, for it produces fruits which do not grow on any such trees as these.

'The truth is that the verities of religion are often very far from being what men want to believe. Much rather are they what men feel they *must* believe, whether they want to or no. "Men hate and despise religion", we read in Pascal's *Pensées*, "but they are afraid it may be true". And no theory of religion can hope to stand that does not take full account of this plain element of obligation which it invariably contains. If all that Feuerbach and Freud say were true, we should expect to find in historical religion a glorification of self-seeking instead of what we do find—a most rigorous self-denial and self-sacrifice and the belief in a God who demands of men things almost impossible to perform.' [1]

Now faith in Jesus Christ is the supreme exemplifi-

[1] Baillie, *The Interpretation of Religion*, p. 163.

cation of this rule or law. For the Christian He is the great object of faith. 'Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved' is for the Christian axiomatic. And it works. There is a tendency among modern writers on Christianity to argue that any such appeal as this is out-of-date because Jesus lived in a time far removed from ours and knew nothing of modern mentality or achievements. It is even suggested that there are contemporary teachers of science and philosophy who would prove better guides in life than He could ever be. This shows a complete misunderstanding of the position. The power of Jesus Christ depends on His personality as a whole and on the appeal which He makes to that in our human nature which is permanent and fundamental. His message, though in time, was for all time, and by doing His will, thinking His thoughts, and sharing His ideals, men still experience spiritual awakening and moral renewal. One of the most noteworthy things in the history of the Church is the vitality of the Person of Jesus Christ. No extravagances of creed or cultus have been able altogether to obscure Him, and Christianity has again and again renewed its life by bringing men into vital touch with the simplicity that is towards Christ. The truth of the Incarnation abides, and in the strength of its human appeal and the definiteness of its response to universal spiritual needs constitutes an abiding witness to the truth and power of the Christian message:

> God may have other words for other worlds,
> But for this world the word of God is Christ.

VI

ETERNAL LIFE [1]

THE end of Christianity is eternal life, i.e. life on a higher and more permanent scale than mere material existence. Jesus Christ came, it is written, that 'men might have life, and might have it abundantly'. He brought life and immortality to light through His gospel. He offered Himself as the life and the light of men. In all this Christianity met and answered a deeply felt human need, and the development of its thought on the subject of eternal life was a quite natural one. Jesus Himself, working on a background of Jewish dualism, taught men to interpret life on a larger scale than that of their physical and material needs. Sayings like 'Man doth not live by bread alone', and parables like that of the rich fool, show how He envisaged life as consisting in something more precious and more lasting than any earthly interests and possessions. His followers all through the history of the Church have never quite lost the sense of a condition above and beyond this mortal scene untrammelled by its limitations and untouched by its sorrows and needs. The consciousness of this is not peculiar to Christianity and has never been quite absent from man's general *Weltanschauung*. It has varied in intensity with the varying

[1] This chapter contains the substance of the Drew Lecture on Immortality delivered by me in London in the autumn of 1928.

changes in our human lot, and among the more sophisticated it is easily explained away. But among the average it remains and functions, and the conflicts which it often causes are among the most fruitful sources of disturbance and discontent. When it can be said of men that 'God hath set eternity in their hearts', we have the key to some of the most baffling problems of our psychology as well as to some of the noblest achievements of the race. Other worldliness may often be interpreted in a low sense, and lead to moral blindness and the neglect of duty, but it has also the power of clarifying man's vision, increasing his sense of proportion, and leading him to great heights of self-sacrificing service. The scale on which a man's life is drawn determines not only his destiny in the future, but also his capacity for living his life in this world as one who has a soul above those things which perish with the using. As St. Paul says of Christians generally, 'We look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal.'

In other words, 'we walk by faith, not by sight', 'as seeing Him who is invisible'. If, as we have already suggested, it is true that obedience is the organ of religious knowledge, then faith is the condition of such obedience, and it is through faith that the obedience becomes possible. It is still the case that by faith alone do men enter into their full Christian inheritance. Faith is the only key which will open the door of eternal life. Therefore

it is true that faith is more than merely intellectual. It is not opposed to reason, but it builds on a foundation laid by reason, what reason itself could never build. Faith is a personal thing, a committal of the self in trust, understanding, and hope, to a course, the end of which is not as yet discerned. It works by the method of hypothesis and justifies itself in experience and by experiment. So the effort to live out one's life *sub specie eternitatis* is the only means by which we can test the adequacy of life on the larger scale and its fitness to our human nature and needs. Nothing is more futile than to try and prove to man in the abstract that he is an heir of eternal life and was not made to die. Nor will he ever be convinced of it by the evidence of psychical phenomena alone. It must come to him along the lines of his everyday experience, and as a consequence of his being what he is. So Canon Charles is right when he argues in his recent book (*The Resurrection of Man*) that it is the qualitative and not the quantitative element in life that really counts. Eternal life for man depends not on the resurrection of the flesh, but on his possession of latent intellectual, moral, and spiritual capacities which can never reach their full fruition in the narrow span of this mortal life. He argues that the soul is not a function of the body, but exists independently of the body which is its organ, and that it is not possible to infer the post-existence of the soul on any other than moral and spiritual grounds.

This, then, is our justification for assuming that

eternal life is a postulate of a moral universe. Such a conception of the universe implies not only the existence and functioning of certain values, but seems also to require that they should be conserved. As Professor Sorley has said:

'The one purpose which, so far as I can see, justifies the field of havoc through which the world passes to better things, is the creation of those values which only free minds can realize. And if free minds, when perfected, are to pass away even for absorption in God, then that value is lost; and we must ask again the question, with less confidence in the answer, whether the values which the world's history offers are worth the price that has been paid for them.'[1]

This question of values is really crucial. The recognition of them and the effort to regulate the whole of life in accordance with their demands opens out to the mind of man an illimitable vista and delivers him from his obsession with material things. It is this again which draws the sting of that pessimism which envisages man as the helpless plaything of vast cosmic forces. The tragedy of this has never been more finely expressed than in the well-known work of Mr. Bertrand Russell in his *Mysticism and Logic*.

'Brief and powerless is man's life: on him and all his race the slow sure doom falls pitiless and dark. Blind to good and evil, reckless of destruction omnipotent matter rolls its relentless way: for man, condemned to-day to lose his dearest, to-morrow himself to pass through the

[1] *Moral Values and the Idea of God*, p. 515.

gates of darkness, it remains only to cherish, ere yet the blow falls, the lofty thoughts that ennoble his little day.'

But among those lofty thoughts should be the conviction *non omnis moriar*. It is the capacity for so thinking which in the long run makes a man the master of his fate and the captain of his soul. It involves a valuation of himself and of his life, which opens out to him a larger world than that revealed by his senses and cannot on any reasonable showing be limited to his present world. Apart, therefore, from all the superstitions and vain imaginations which have gathered round it, man's belief in eternal life still holds the field as a natural corollary of any interpretation of personality which finds in it more than a mere physical mechanism.

This conclusion, however, is by no means universally accepted. Modern science has raised the whole question of human survival in a new form, and the problem has become almost more intriguing than ever. But the line of approach and the conditions and atmosphere of the discussion have changed. It is not so very long since the fact of survival was generally taken for granted, and debate centred round what was called the state of the departed. Many still living can remember the keen and anxious canvassing of questions like eternal punishment and conditional immortality. Now, however, all that is changed and we are once more face to face with the question in its barest terms. Is survival under any conditions thinkable or possible? On the one hand there are those who have revolted from the crude

popular conceptions of heaven and hell, such as still obtain, often in a grossly materialistic form, in many churches, and have abandoned any hope of a future life at all. On the other hand there are those, and they are now a vast majority, whose materialism is far more deep-seated and persuades them that a man's life begins and ends with his body. When his body dies the man himself ceases to be. The interesting thing about the modern form of this belief or disbelief is that it no longer seems to carry with it any moral disadvantage. Once the hope of a life to come was regarded as a great incentive to goodness and endurance in this life, and the fear of what the future might bring was a great safeguard against the temptation to evil. But as civilization has advanced and the life we now live in the flesh has become more full, more absorbing, and more protected, men have found these incentives to and sanctions for goodness in the interests and obligations of this present life. They are contracting the habit of looking upon all life as a vast mechanical system in which each individual plays his obscure if indispensable part, and their business is to fit in and run as smoothly as possible. That way lies success and happiness, and there is neither sense nor use in looking further. The most characteristic frame of mind to-day is a practical materialism which, without any philosophical or scientific basis, unconsciously moulds men's minds and directs their action. Materialism, discredited as a philosophy, is accepted as a rule of life. It becomes, therefore, above all things necessary that

men should recognize at once the gains and limitations of the scientific method, and should distinguish clearly between the legitimate findings of the natural sciences and those philosophical interpretations of the universe and of human nature which claim to be based upon them.

In any event, therefore, we must be prepared to grant freely that we owe an immense debt to the labours of the men of science, a debt we are sometimes too slow in paying. They have contributed enormously to our understanding of the universe and to the amelioration of the human lot. In their own department they stand supreme, and their word may be accepted as final. When it comes to philosophy the data which science supplies have to be taken into account and given their full weight, but they do not necessarily exclude other data derived from other sources. To say that they do is an arguable proposition, not a scientific statement. In any interpretation of the universe or of experience, values have to be taken into account as well as facts, and it is with facts that science deals. When, therefore, an eminent man of science declares that his chemical or biological researches justify him in saying that there is no God and no future life for man, he is going beyond his book. It may be quite true that his researches do not discover for him either God or immortality. In the nature of the case they could hardly be expected to do so. But to build upon this failure a theory of the universe which excludes these as possibilities is not a scientific proposition. It is a

philosophical judgement which must be dealt with on its own merits. The so-called conflict between science and religion is really a conflict between two philosophies, and peace will come not through the victory of one over the other, but through a mutual alliance and delimitation of spheres. As Lord Balfour has said:

'Our experience has a double outlook. The first we may call material. It brings us face to face with such subjects as electricity, mass, motion, force, energy, and with such manifestations of energy as ethereal radiation. The second is spiritual. The first deals with objects which are measurable, calculable, capable (up to a point) of precise definition. The second deals with the immeasurable, the incalculable, the indefinable, and (let me add) the all-important. The first touches the fundamentals of science; the second is intimately connected with religion. Yet different as they seem, both are real. They belong to the same universe: they influence each other: somewhere and somehow they must be in contact along a common frontier.' [1]

In dealing, then, with the problem of immortality the first point that concerns the scientific observer is the fact that the belief in a future life in some form or other is primitive, widespread, and practically holds the field. It would almost seem as though man, even in the earliest stages of his career as a conscious being, knew he was not made to die. One feature at least of that animism which forms the matrix of all religious ideas and beliefs is the consciousness of

[1] *Science, Religion, and Reality*, p. 16.

a spirit world populated in part by those who have departed this life. The evidence for this in primitive ideas and customs is overwhelming. It belongs to the instinctive and irrational stage of man's development, and as men become more sophisticated and their ideas more rationalized it tends to take different forms, and in some cases even disappear. One of the most interesting and significant results of certain forms of modern culture is the fact that it tends to destroy in some people any desire for immortality, and when the desire perishes the hope tends to fade away. Be that as it may, however, the fact remains that both the desire and the hope are deeply embedded in man's native consciousness. This is a fact which the scientific observer has to note and reckon with, and it may be taken as established beyond all question. By itself it proves little or nothing. Even if we argue that the belief in immortality is universal, matters of this kind cannot be settled by any process of counting heads. What the scientific observer may legitimately reckon with is the fact that the belief is in possession and that it has played a great part in the development of human life and thought. If man is organic to the universe, it may be said that the belief is organic to man. It is not sheer illusion, nor is it the invention of interested parties. It is ingrained, if not instinctive, and it has resisted successfully a host of antagonistic forces. As such, therefore, it may be regarded at least as a working hypothesis, the value of which has been proved and the truth of which is still an open question. We are bound, however, to

recognize that ideas and beliefs equally widespread and deeply-rooted have been in the advance of knowledge proved to be false or illusory. The belief in immortality must find for itself other justification if it is to endure.

We turn, therefore, now to the very remarkable and pertinent contribution to this discussion which is being made by modern psychology. The science of mind, the study of mental processes, is still in its infancy. On no subject is it more necessary to exercise caution and to avoid hasty generalizations and theorizing. If we are to retain a strictly scientific attitude, we shall look with suspicion on the various recent developments of behaviourism, and on the facile deductions from psycho-pathology which are making loud claims on the attention of the public. What psychology, strictly so-called, can accomplish is subject to severe limitations, and it must be kept within them. It is a science of mind, not a philosophy of life or experience. As a science it acquaints the observer with the origin and working of mental processes and with the vast and varied contribution which these make to human behaviour. It shows the close connexion between psychical states or phenomena and their physical bases, though it does not justify the identification often made between the mind and its organ the brain. Indeed, one of the fairly assured conclusions of modern psychology is to the effect that if the body affects the mind, the mind affects the body even more powerfully. There is also not a little evidence that goes to indicate a

certain independence of the mind, and from the mind's independent action it is not a far cry to its independent existence, or at least to the possibility of it. Professor J. B. S. Haldane, who has no belief in personal immortality and no desire for it, is not thereby any the more inclined to believe that his mind is no more than a part of his body. He says:

'But if death will probably be the end of me as a finite individual mind, that does not mean that it will be the end of me altogether. It seems to me immensely unlikely that mind is a mere by-product of matter.

For if my mental processes are determined wholly by the motions of atoms in my brain I have no reason to suppose that my beliefs are true. They may be sound, chemically, but that does not make them sound logically. And hence I have no reason for supposing my brain to be composed of atoms.

In order to escape from this necessity of sawing away the branch on which I am sitting, so to speak, I am compelled to believe that mind is not wholly conditioned by matter. But as regards my own very finite and imperfect mind, I can see, by studying the effects on it of drugs, alcohol, disease, and so on, that its limitations are largely at least due to my body.'[1]

Here, then, we have opened out to us a vista of possibilities which have a solid foundation in fact and on which speculation is legitimate. Dr. Haldane, for example, goes on to argue that without the body the mind may perish altogether, but, he adds, 'it seems to me quite as probable that it will lose its limitations

[1] *Possible Worlds* and other essays.

and be merged into an infinite mind or something analogous to a mind which I have reason to suspect probably exists behind nature. How this might be accomplished I have no idea'. The fact, then, remains that neither psychology nor physiology give any real grounds for the materialism which is so often based upon them. The deepest analysis of mind and its operations leaves us with mind itself an independent entity and with a mental world as real as the material. No one denies the reality of such concepts as truth, beauty, and goodness, or of the world of mind which they represent. Here there is much to be said for the old-fashioned argument for the priority of mind over matter. In their explanations of the origin of the universe on a purely materialistic basis, writers like Herbert Spencer were compelled to endow primordial matter with the promise and potency of mind before they could, as it were, get it to work. Modern physicists reach a similar conclusion on quite other grounds. Rejecting all purely materialistic and mechanistic interpretations of nature, they find in nature itself mental qualities like purposiveness, and so recognize that it is only intelligible in terms of mind.

This, then, brings us to the crucial question as to what we mean by mind. Psychologists are not agreed, but there is an increasing disposition to regard Mind as something more than a stream of consciousness. Consciousness itself is something more than an impersonal quality or force which the brain gathers into a focus. It is at least relatively personal and teleological,

containing not merely sensation and impulse, but aim and purpose. It can thus only be interpreted in terms not of matter but of self and personality. The relations between mind and body can never be understood so long as we identify or confuse the two. There is a real dualism here, and one which we need not be ashamed to assert. The two interact upon each other, and both have their part to play in shaping conscious life. We cannot here enter on any discussion as to the nature of the self or personality. Our best course is to appeal to experience. To all of us the unity and identity of our selfhood is an obvious fact, however little we may be able to explain it. As Professor Pratt says, 'The only forms of consciousness we know anything about are personal, and with every psychic state there goes a reference, explicit or implicit, to a self which somehow owns or has these states, perceives these objects, acts and feels and knows in these volitions, emotions, and judgements.' In other words, I am something more than my perception, feelings, and experiences generally, just as I am something more than my body. Over these things I have a certain co-ordinative and directing power. In the last resort it is not true that things are in the saddle and ride us. At least we never willingly give up our power over them which is our characteristic, our prerogative, and our pride. To this conception of the self, or soul as he prefers to call it, Professor McDougall has given classic expression in the following terms:

'We may then describe a soul as a being that possesses,

or is, the sum of definite capacities for psychical activity and psycho-physical interaction, of which the most fundamental are: (1) the capacity of producing, in response to certain physical stimuli (the sensory processes of the brain), the whole range of sensation qualities in their whole range of intensities; (2) the capacity of responding to certain sensation-complexes with the production of meanings, as, for example, spatial meanings; (3) the capacity of responding to these sensations and these meanings with feeling and conation or effort, under the spur of which further meanings may be brought to consciousness in accordance with the laws of reproduction of similars and of reasoning; (4) the capacity of reacting upon the brain-processes to modify their course in a way which we cannot clearly define, but which we may provisionally conceive as a process of guidance by which streams of nervous energy may be concentrated in a way that antagonizes the tendency of all physical energy to dissipation and degradation.'

This self or soul, then, is a reality. It is, of course, organic to the body and to the physical world generally, but its function there is creative and regulative rather than merely subordinate. Modern psychological research has abundantly demonstrated the immense power of the mind over the body; there seems almost no limit to it, and although we have little or no direct evidence of the existence and action of souls apart from bodies, the hypothesis that such existence and action are possible is one that solves more difficulties than it creates, and has at least a sound basis in facts.

We turn now to another and quite different aspect

of our subject. It is often urged by those who deny immortality that it is entirely excluded from the bounds of possibility by the doctrine or hypothesis of evolution. This contention again can only be maintained by those who take a purely mechanistic view of the course of nature. In other words, it implies a materialism which we have seen on other grounds to be inadequate as a philosophy. The philosophy of science at the present time tends in the direction of discovering a purposive activity in nature. For as Professor Thomson says, 'Only a system with order and progress in the heart of it could elaborate itself so perfectly and so intricately'. But purposiveness is a quality of mind or personality. It is that which we know in ourselves as our most eminent characteristic, and to find it in the universe is to find that the universe is only interpretable in terms of a supreme mind or personality. If it is a machine working efficiently and for ends, then like every other machine it has behind it mind. If, then, man is organic to the universe, and if, as is obviously the case, he too has been the subject of a long and intricate developmental process, it is only reasonable to assume that this process does not stop with his body.

Indeed, so far as his physical organism is concerned, there is reason to suppose that man's development has already reached a term, and that further progress will only be along the lines of his higher nature, i. e. of his moral and spiritual personality. In this regard, 'it doth not yet appear what we shall be'. Here the

hypothesis of a life eternal, immortal, and invisible, seems to meet the need better than any other and to provide scope for that process of spiritual evolution which, though it may be begun here and now, seems to require some larger scale of being for its completion. It is not only the case that 'man has forever', as the poet says, but that he needs 'forever'. God hath set eternity in our hearts and only in eternity can we reach the full development of our higher selves.

The conclusion that there is a spiritual reality underlying the world of nature and finding expression in human lives, while philosophically justifiable is really inaccessible to science. It cannot be reached by any process of analysis, observation, or experiment. It belongs to the unobservable, and for this reason is easily relegated to the region of the unreal and impossible. There is, however, no scientific warrant for any such conclusion. Indeed, the matter would really seem to be on all fours with the most recent findings of physicists regarding the ultimate constitution of this material world. In the last analysis matter itself becomes a mental product, a mathematical quantity, or a hypothetical X, whose existence has to be inferred rather than described or observed. It is, however, none the less real. Though unobservable it contains the promise and potency of all that is to be. It is at least justified as an hypothesis. We assume that it is so. Now it is in every respect the same with the conception of a spiritual world. Ideas like God, Freedom, and Immortality are incapable of scientific analysis and proof. Like

many of the ultimate facts of science they are verifiable hypotheses, and solve more problems than they create. As indispensable factors in any rational view of the universe they hold the field and are so far worthy of respect. As the Dean of St. Paul's says:

'The naturalist arguments against a spiritualistic interpretation of nature are certainly formidable. Briefly, the best answer to them is to remind opponents that without the free and creative activities of the mind there could be no naturalism. Further, it is legitimate to point out that if the spiritual faculty is given fair play and suffered to develop normally suspicion and distrust of it must disappear. We do not disparage the results of science, or throw doubt upon them when we affirm that they are the creation of the free spirit which finds in nature those laws which their and our Creator has planted alike in the conscious and the unconscious world. The world we know, the world of sound, light and colour, of all properties whatsoever, of the ugly, or the beautiful, of pain and pleasure, is in the most real sense the product of consciousness itself. The spirit is never dumb, and it speaks a different language from that of mathematics or physics.'

For many, however, such a purely speculative position will not suffice. They require something more concrete in the way of proofs based on evidence before they can believe in anything so difficult as Immortality, or the soul's survival of bodily death and decay. Hence the prominence given in many quarters to spiritualism, and the importance attached to the evidence it offers for the existence and activity of discarnate spirits. The difficulty of the

subject is notorious, and it is not diminished by the maze of superstition and fraud with which it is often enveloped. But the researches of Professor Richet, an independent observer with a strongly materialistic bias, go far to indicate the genuineness of certain mediumistic communications and the probability of the persistence of personality and of some form of ethereal body as its vehicle. Here again, no doubt, some help is given us by modern theories as to the ultimate nature of matter. The subject is one on which the wise man will keep an open mind. In our present state of ignorance as to the relations between mind and body, and as to the true nature of personality we have again to fall back on the method of the hypothesis. In this universe nothing is ever lost but only changed, and that the change we know as death leaves the personality surviving in some new and non-material form is an hypothesis which we may regard as at least in process of verification.

This becomes the more evident when we discuss the question in terms of that wider view of the universe which we can only call spiritual. If, as is now very generally agreed, the purely mechanistic and material conception of the universe must be abandoned, it is difficult to see that any stopping-place is possible short of the full theistic view of things. This conclusion very closely affects our view of human immortality. The problem can only be adequately treated as part of the larger question of theism, and ought not to be dealt with apart from its religious context; for it is more than merely a

question of survival or post-existence. The real issue and centre of interest is in what used to be called the state of the departed, and for that we have to depend not on science but on theology. There are, no doubt, religions in which there is no place for immortality, and ideas of God which neither suggest nor sanction anything like eternal human values.

But in Christianity there is revealed a God whose relations with men are based on a high conception of the intrinsic worth of human personality. In God's sight there are values here which are worth preserving, and it is unthinkable that the God who created them will ever suffer them to perish. We are sadly aware of what man can do in his own despite. He may deliberately quench the spirit and live persistently on the lower moral and spiritual plain when he knows that the higher is open to him. What the future of those who so misuse their opportunities may be we cannot tell. But the souls of the unrighteous as well as of the righteous are in the hands of God, and we must be content to leave them there, in the sure and certain faith that the judge of all the earth will do right. Nothing can shake our conviction that the highest life we know here is but a dim shadow and foretaste of a far higher and more glorious life hid with Christ in God. This is neither egotism nor delusion. It is a conclusion not without warrant both in modern science and modern philosophy. As Canon Streeter has said:

'In the last resort, it is not a question of what we personally would be content with for ourselves, or what

opinions we entertain as to our own individual value. It is what the Universe is worth. What can we say of It, or the Power behind It, if It treats the individuality of heroic souls like oyster-shells at a banquet, whisked from the table to make room for the next course? It is all very well to talk of love and right and eternal values as things worth while for their own sake. These things are not self-subsistent; they are only names we give to qualities and experiences apprehended by conscious minds—our minds at any rate, and, if there be a God, by His. But if there be no God, and if we who see and feel these values are only creatures of a day, somehow they shrink into pathetic aspirations. Values shrivel unless they are recognized as such by some Immortal Being.'[1]

Here, then, is the conclusion of the whole matter. We are such stuff, not as dreams are made of, but as life is made of. The ultimate reality is life, and a life that is persistent and indestructible. It knows and lives by change. But only that which is mortal in it decays. There is a seed in us of the immortal, eternal, and invisible, of whose growth and fate we can only speak in symbol and metaphor and with bated breath. 'Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when He shall appear, we shall be like Him; for we shall see Him as He is.'

[1] *Reality*, p. 314.

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